MY GARDEN WALK.

WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON.

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1894

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By WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON.

Lit
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MY GARDEN WALK.

"Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli."

JUVENAL SATIRA I.

"Whate'er men do, their vows, fear, wrath, delight,
Their joys, vagaries, such the stuff I write."

PROEM.

I. BUDS.
II. BLOSSOMS. RATHE PRIMROSES.
III. WILDWOOD FLOWERS.
IV. THE ROSE.
V. MARGUERITES.
VI. LAUREL AND MYRTLE.
VII. BRAMBLES AND BERRIES.
VIII. VIOLETS, PANSIES AND ASPHODELS.

THIS VOLUME

IS

DEDICATED

TO

MY DAUGHTERS.

———

I would my hand had skill, my voice had tune,
To tell in numbers how my full heart beats
With tender love, and still the theme repeats,
When thinking on kind Nature's kindest boon,
Sent to me e'er my manhood's royal noon,
The gift of children, in whose being meets
All that paternal pride forecasts with sweets
Born of a mother's love, withdrawn too soon.

Fair buds that from the Queen-Rose stem have sprung
— O flower of Eden beyond all earthly price,
You leave us naught save memory's fragrance faint —
Their gentle heads in sorrow long have hung,
Catching love's perfume sweet from paradise,
Immortal message of a vanished saint.

I

BUDS.

Buds. Motto.
Youth's Echoes.
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Elysium.
Faerie Land.
The Broken Bough.
Anacreon to his Lyre. Translation.
The Street.
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II

BLOSSOMS. RATHE PRIMROSES.

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The Coquette.
La Gitana.
Cleopatra.
The Marble Heart.
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III

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BALLADS.

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Death of Daniel Boone.
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IV

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MELODIES AND THRENODIES.

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Once for all.
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VII

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VIII

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Kosmos—Dream of the Time Spirit.
The Thane's Saying.
Welcome, Dear Grief.
Prayer Answered.
Rejoice.
The Fear of Death.
Euthanasia.

PROEM.

A poem should be a rare and perfect work —
Each word a gem set in the graven gold —
Beneath whose symbols subtle meanings lurk,
So that the soul and sense may each behold
The image mirrored there it knows its own.
A poem is not an airy bubble blown
By childish lips in merriment or play;
Though but a story, still it must be told
In strains to live beyond a summer day,
If to the epic height 'twould rise and swell,
And bloom perennial as the asphodel:
Or should the singer dare the lyre essay,
His skillful hand must strike with plectrum bold
His own tense heartstrings, till they throb and thrill
With ode and pæan that picture forth the soul
In forms of thought and surging sounds that roll
And the vast concave with their echoes fill.

If I come piping then on minor key,
Think not I hope to match with spirits high,
Born for large fame and immortality,
Whom willingly the world will not let die;
But as, at peep of dawn some tiny bird
With twitter small among the leaves is heard,

Till his weak note wakes all the grove to song
And the full flock with tuneful voice reply,
In the fair woodlands making echo long
Their psalmody, with praise to God and joy;
And last, as up to Zeus the immortal boy,
Young Ganymede, on eagle pinion strong,
His flagon bore, the lark shall soar on high
With meed of music, so my lays shall fire
Our Southland bards their minstrelsy to sing,
And stir some spirit, on Olympian wing,
Boldly to rise and lead the warbling choir.

But, ah, in vain! My voice comes all too late,
Since Wilde, whose "life was like the summer's rose,"
Has sweetly sung, and that harsh stepdame, Fate,
Has made a wreck of melancholy Poe's
Seraphic harp and jangled his sweet Bells:
Sad singer, what a dirge to hope there knells,
When black winged doubt with thy sad Raven broods,
And in thy Haunted Palace madness glows,
While music hails thee master of her moods!
But soft, a murmurous melody I hear;
Through all the chords it rings; it is Lanier!
Ah, gentle spirit, in the solitudes
Of soul a fount of living waters flows;
And there thou'st woven into a cestus rare,
With words, a skein of harmony divine,
And girdled Nature, with a song so fine,
It lends its voiceful charms to earth and air.

Nor can my heart its wild, quick throb forget,
When first it heard ring out "My Maryland,"
That war song bold which haunts the memory yet,
And marches through the years with foot fall grand.
Why art thou silent, Randall? Did the pall
That draped the Virgin slain, on thee too fall?
Or shall we hear thy herald trumpet sound
Her coming, once again on earth to stand,
The Immortal One, now risen from depths profound,
Her old robes cast, and changed in form and name,
But still in hate of tyranny the same?
As thou the herald of the Goddess crowned,
When waved aloft her flashing warlike brand,
So Ryan, Poet Priest, compels the tear
That for his country fills reluctant eyes,
Then drops where prone the silent minstrel lies,
Draped with the Conquered Banner by her bier.

But, as I name them, on my memory throng
All the sweet choir that mingle in the strain
The bay crowned bards who to the band belong,
Led by the mystical and sad eyed Hayne.
Among them who, with tenderer, truer touch,
Unlocks the heart than she who loveth much,
The gracious lady, who in Lexington
With healing words hath shed a balm for pain,
And sympathy for martyred virtue won?
I may not name them: many the honored shade
Whose accents live, though in the dust be laid
Their cerements of clay—their world work done;

Yet still they haunt the heart, that sacred fane
Where poesy lingers and its soft glow sheds:
Be mine the task to wreath their laureled heads,
And fire new Sauls to join the prophetic train.

I

BUDS.

Scorn not this posy, withered now and sere,
Not culled from flowers, but buds unformed and crude;
It brings back memories of the opening year,
When first the muse with trembling voice I wooed.

1848—1852.

YOUTH'S ECHOES.

O what I brought when I was young,
As love's large tribute, was a tongue
That all the sounds of Nature sung,
That echoed the continuous surge
Of mighty waters when they urge
Their leap beyond the torrent's verge;
Echoes I call them, for no word
Can tell the melody I heard
In breeze and stream and song of bird;
In all the sounds and all the sights,
In which boon Nature so delights,
Disporting on her airy heights—
Yet echoes from the soul of man.

THE PLANTATION HOME.

I know a fair plantation home, set in the far south-
west,
In a land of rarer beauty than Araby the Blest.
A rude and logbuilt cottage, half hid amid the trees,
Which sigh and kiss with perfumed lips the seaborn
evening breeze,
Peeps from the tangled forest, where it meets the
prairie wide
And the live oak and the mesquite grow kindly side
by side.
There golden waves of wild rye roll with a shim-
mering sheen,
And cotton blooms make gay the fields that fringe
the woodland green,
In whose dim aisles swing sadly the trailing moss
o'erhead,
Shrouding the green in funeral grey like banners of
the dead.
There timidly the startled doe shrinks from the hun-
ter's eye,
And teaches at her warning the spotted fawn to fly,
And the heron stands the livelong day beside the
sedgy marsh,

While high in heaven the wild-goose wedge with answering call cronks harsh.
There man comes not with troubling foot to break the long day dream,
And nature reigns in solitude, serene, sad and supreme,
O'er a land forever beautiful, a sky forever clear;
Ah, may that land be happy to those that are so dear.

ELYSIUM.

What is Elysium, Child of dreams?
A land that with strange beauty teems;
An island in the silvery seas,
Where the low murmur of the breeze,
With a half-human sighing sings
The mingled charms that Hesperus flings
On sea, and sky and rocky shore,
When leaps the surf and breakers roar;
Where zephyrs breathe with plaintive moan,
Soft as a lover's parting tone;
Where rippling streamlets weave a measure,
That laps the soul in languid pleasure,
And music's varying strains combine
To thrill the soul with joy divine;
Where fruits and flowers that charm the eye
Scattered in rich profusion lie—
The purpling grape on vagrant vines
Whose blood in crystal goblets shines,
Rose and lily and bloom of gold
And flambent cups that honey hold
Pendulous swing, or gem the green
With jewels fit to crown a queen;
Where mermaids comb their yellow hair,
And sound their shells to a mournful air,

Or sing the story of one who grieved
Because she loved and was deceived,
But, trusting still and loving on,
Her wandering lover to her won;
Where fragrant mists that lightly hover
Lift silver veils and scenes discover
That breathe of a diviner seeming
Than ever crossed a mortal's dreaming;
Where joys of sense and spirit throng—
There is Elysium, realm of song!

FAERIE LAND.

Is it the faerie land I see
Down in the depths of the water dim,
Where falls the shadow of leaf and tree,
And water-nymphs chant their evening hymn;
Or, is that foliage, dusky and brown,
Wreathing in many a garlanded crown,
The substance, whose mocking shadows frown
From the depths of the water dim?

Is it the beautiful faerie land,
With castle and tower and stately hall,
That I darkly trace on the wave-washed sand
When the sombre curtains of twilight fall;
Or is it the image of yon high shore,
Trending away to a blasted moor,
With ghostlier outline than ever before
Was traced on the wave-washed sand?

Is it a voice from Elfland drear
That tauntingly whispers of love forgot,
Or the murmuring breeze I faintly hear,
And the waters that glide by this lone spot;
Or is it the distant evening bell,
Whose cadences slowly sink and swell,
Which calls to prayer by its solemn knell,
And soothingly whispers of love forgot.

THE BROKEN BOUGH.

To a lily in a dream,
Stooping by a sullen stream,
Vestal holy, bending lowly
By a slow and sullen stream,
Spake an oak-branch sere and riven,
By the slothful currents driven
Midst the sedges on the edges
Of the slow and sullen stream,
Where 'twas drifted by the surges
Sighing melancholy dirges.

"I'm a hapless thing, and gloom
Brooding o'er me is my doom;
A blighted bough thou seest me now,
With a hapless, hopeless doom.
Riven by the lightning's stroke
From a gnarled and ancient oak,
At whose branches Heaven launches
All its lurid bolts of flame—
Thus, alas! thou seest me now
But a sere and withered bough."

"Lily, love me! Lily, love me!
By the blue arch bright above thee;

I am lonely, I'm one only
In the wide world all alone;
Though I be a rugged stranger
Marred and searred with life and danger,
Sighing ever, happy never,
In the wide world all alone;
I am sinking here before thee;
I adore thee,—I adore thee."

And the lilly by the stream
Had no more a quiet dream,
Dropping gently, innocently,
By the slow and sullen stream;
Yet she gave no outward token,
But in accents soft and broken,
Murmured slowly, murmured lowly,
"Ah! believe me, 'tis a dream;
And she bent all broken-hearted,
As the blighted bough departed.

Far away the bough is wending;
Yet behold the lily bending,
No reprieving to her grieving
By the slow and sullen stream;
And no more of peace is given
To the oak-branch reft and riven,
Drifting sadly, never gladly,
Down the slow and sullen stream;
For he hears the breezes sighing
That the loved and lost is dying.

TRANSLATION.

ANACREON TO HIS LYRE.

My Lyre! I fain would celebrate
The sons of Atreus and the fate
Of Cadmus, but it is in vain
For me to try so high a strain;
Thy chords against the theme rebel,
And only in Love's praises swell.
I would Alcides' feats essay,
If I could make thy strings obey;
But Love's soft music ever springs
Spontaneous from thy wilful strings.
Ye Heroes, then, henceforth farewell!
Your deeds I may not hope to tell;
For amorous numbers still will glow,
And from my Lyre unbidden flow.

THE STREET.

A FRAGMENT.

Up from the throngéd street,
Where the crowded crossings meet,
Voluminously come
The busy hum,
The steady beat
Of a thousand restless feet,
Which in piteous cadence falling
Seem forever to repeat,
With a solemn sense of sorrow,
Some tale of woe appalling
That may happen on the morrow,
Or may be but the recalling
Of a wrong the heart once galling,
Which now stirs forgotten grief
From the slumber of relief.

No human spirit knows
What turbid tide there goes
In surges through the way,
By night and day;
The stream that flows
In a billowy flood of woes,
Which in prayers have kept appealing,

Or have writhed in silent throes,
Fearing, scorning aught to utter,
But now and then revealing
Thoughts, like bats that flit and flutter,
In the murky twilight wheeling,
Which, in many a bitter feeling,
By the young, the strong, the gifted,
Are in sighs alone uplifted.

THE TEXAS MOTHER'S LAMENT.*

Could not insatiate hands seek other blood
Than thine, my beautiful, my baby boy?
How still thou sleepest, my brave hero child!
So cold and still—thy hazel eye bedimmed,
And thy young, chubby cheek, that shamed the rose
For bloom, all paled, all paled and wan in death—
Thou droopest like a wilted prairie flower.
For me thou'st died,—for me, thy mother, boy;
For me who would have given a thousand lives
To save thee, and yet weakly failed to shield
With this torn bosom, that seemed broad and strong
To guard from fatal harm the fatherless.
They came, the pitiless, with painted face
And visage darkly stained for war and death:
They trod the trail of blood: I saw their eyes
Fierce gleaming, and their grim and bodeful looks,
Their braided scalp locks, and remorseless knives,
And O, the rifle that hath laid thee low!
Where was my boy, when I most womanly
And weak did fly—he who an hour ago
In mirthfulness did mock the babbling brook
And tiptoe chased the flaunting butterfly?

*See Note A, end of book.

He was where his father would have been,
Guarding my trembling form.

I weep no more.
No more I sing his lullaby of love,
The song of sleep with which I cradled him
Upon my breast. I sing his death song now;
His hymn of victory over many men.
The rattlesnake hath struck my dappled fawn;
The glittering eye, which in its gaze bears death,
Hath fallen on him and stolen his life away.
Foul carrion birds have borne my falcon down,
While, yet unfledged, he plumed a callow wing.
Many the sorrows that on woman fall,
To blight her weary heart, but none like this.
The path of light, that, to my girlish eyes,
Seemed fair and fresh with fragrant blossoming
Is but a way of woe that leads straight down
Unto the tomb, and every little space
Is marked by deaths, like milestones by the road.

Thou hast not perished unavenged, my son!
Thy practiced eye and steady hand sent home
Their death-shots to the cruel breasts of three,
Despite their crouching forms, their savage wiles,
And all the guile of Indian stratagem.
Long madest thou brave defence of hearth and home,
When lo! they fled dismayed before thine arm,—
Goliaths before my David's little arm.
A fierce, exultant cry broke from thy lips

And followed mocking on their flying heels;
Thy form dialated and thine eye flashed fire,
As if inspired by prophet lore thou read'st
Tablets of gold, by mortal eyes unseen,
Set up beyond the limits of the grave.
Thou saw'st thy father on the distant shore;
Thou knew'st thy father by his lordly mien,
And by his warlike port, and by the smile
Wherewith he greeted thee, and by the wounds
Which bled in front, and by his red right hand:
'Twas then they slew thee—slew thee as they fled.

He sank with limbs relaxed. The chance of war
Hath wrought more ill than force and cunning arts.
"Mother," his young lips murmured, and his eyes
Strove through the gathering darkness to discern
The face he loved so well; and his young hands
Clung to my neck, and, feebly wandering,
Sought for the curls his pretty lips had kissed
In sportive babyhood, when on my knee.
"Mother," he whispered; "Mother;"—and was dead.

My child I do not mourn; I sing thy death
As Spartan mothers wailed above their dead.
They who have slain thee iron bosoms bear;
But I am ice, am adamant, to them.
Thou hast died nobly, and I do not grieve,
Son of a warrior, worthy of thy sire
Who reared a pyramid of deathless fame
On the red ruins of the Alamo!

I do not grieve, I sing triumphantly.
The mother of a lion-hearted child,
I too, who bore thee, feel the flame-touched blood,
Which was in thee, and is of me, and scorns
The grief of mothers weeping silently.
I am a cubless dam; mine eyes are dry,
For such a loss brings death and blasts the heart.

I said I would not mourn thee, but said not
That I no more would touch that pale, broad brow
That frowns defiance to thy murderers,
Nor press that pouting lip till now untaught
To breathe of aught save love and hope and joy,
Stamped with the sacred seal of martyrdom.
Cease, faltering voice! thy task is almost done;
Close, aching eyes in tearless misery!
Take, take my boy! this last, this cold, cold kiss;
Then break, my heart! in speechless agony.

1854.

II

BLOSSOMS.

RATHE PRIMROSES.

"Pale primroses,
That die unmarried ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength."

— *Shakespeare.*

1848—1852.

BLOSSOMS.

A PRELUDE.

These be the blossoms in the green
That gaily decked life's vernal scene
With herb and flower and leaf and spray,
When frolic Cupid had his play,
Weaving with wine and dance and song
A merry music all day long.
E'en as the bees, which hum and swarm
When blooming May comes blythe and warm,
Make music, but of honey naught,
So I, alas, flush and untaught,
Must needs make melody and sing
And nestle under Cupid's wing,
Who left to mock my mimic woe
These flower tipped darts, this broken bow.
But when I met the Love-God true,
Not Dionysus, with his crew
And rabble rout and Mænad throng,
Swept more tempestuously along
And set men's wits and hearts aflame,
When he to Hellas conquorer came,
Than Aphrodite's royal son,
Elate with countless victories won.
I answered to his joyous call,

And made myself his willing thrall,
To bear his cup, his bow, his shield,
To string his lyre, or take the field,
And still obedient to the breath
Of his behest, to welcome death.

FLORENCE.

In England's rose-embowered vales,
Each gentle-featured cottage maiden,
If we believe the minstrel's tales,
Outvies the wondrous charms of Aidenn;
But oh! the eyes of heavenly blue,
The clustering curls of auburn tresses,
Must yield to those of richer hue;
Who sees fair Florence, thus confesses.

On Scotia's hills there dwells a race,
Whose daughters o'er the highland heather
Follow the red-deer in the chase,
With bonnet blue and heron-feather;
But ah! their flaxen locks, their air,
Their agile limbs and ruddy faces,
Cannot in loveliness compare
With Florence in her gentler graces.

The soft and dreamy maid of Spain,
Her olive cheek suffused with blushes,
With magic music's tenderest strain
Her lover's jealous chiding hushes;
But olive cheek and light guitar
And dulcet notes from lips vermilion,
Must pale before Kentucky's star—
Thou art not Florence, fair Castilian.

THE COQUETTE.

The elf that frolics in thy smile
A joyless cynic might beguile;
The pouting cherub on thy lip
Would tempt an anchorite to sip;
The pensive angel in thine eye
Could make me weep—I scarce know why.

Thou'rt like the magic mocking bird
Whose fitful song at eve is heard,
As, flitting mid the bloomy bowers,
White with rose and jasmine flowers,
He weaves like thee the web of sound
Whose vocal meshes fold us round.

Thou'rt like a timid, playful fawn,
Serene as twilight, blithe as dawn,
With bounding step and winsome face,
And movement of such perfect grace
That, as I gaze, thy sweet control
Bends to its will my vanquished soul.

LA GITANA.

As the tall lily, bending before the light breeze,
Lends her lips to his kisses with playful devotion,
Or the Niobe-willow, the saddest of trees,
Waves its silver-lined foliage with tremulous motion,
So sways La Gitana, Gitana, Gitana,
So waves La Gitana her light tambourine.

As bright cloudlets at sunset, all purple and gold,
Slowly soar in the amethyst liquid and tender,
Or the butterfly, flitting o'er woodland and wold,
Stoops to kiss for a moment the dahlia's proud splendor,
So glides La Gitana, Gitana, Gitana,
So bends La Gitana with light tambourine.

As the mystic cicala repeats his shrill notes,
Or the mocking bird woos, his serenade singing,
Or the lark, who at dawn in the midheaven floats,
O'er meadow and upland sends his clear carols ringing,
So trills La Gitana, Gitana, Gitana,
So sings La Gitana, with light tambourine.

CLEOPATRA.

Antony melted pearls in wine,
To make his love a drink divine,—
Would that such costly gifts were mine,
Cleopatra!

Thy gilded galley proudly glides,
Its silken awnings flap the sides,—
My heart's the barge where Eros rides,
Cleopatra!

At thy small feet he laid the East,
He made thy life a bridal feast;—
Would that my life gave joy the least,
Cleopatra!

Conqueror of Kings! for thy sweet sway
Empire and life he cast away;—
They were meet guerdon for one day,
Cleopatra!

O for one glance of thy bright eyes!
O for thy beauty's peerless prize!
What matter, if thy lover dies!
Cleopatra!

THE MARBLE HEART.

The poets tell how an ideal beauty
Pygmalion forced the marble to disclose,
And wrought, with hand true to artistic duty,
A shape that fired him in its cold repose.

The sculptor loved his work, and Aphrodite
Filled with flush life that fairest form of art;
And so, poets say, her foster child took pity
And gave the sculptor, in return, a heart.

Thus fancy bows to what it hath created,
—Though the old story is not rightly told—
The poet sees a form angelic, mated
With heart of marble, all alive, yet cold;

A beauteous maid, whose face divine profusion
Hath dowered with all the Cypriot Queen bestows,
Till naught is wanting, save the one illusion
That in her bosom beats a heart that glows.

MILDRED.

Where Mildred moves, come cloudless skies
And airs with perfume filled,
Or, if a cloud perchance should rise,
Her glance its gloom will gild.

She goes, and bleaker blows the wind,
The flowers less sweetly spring,
The vine with sadder leaf is twined,
The birds less gaily sing.

The river glides by marge and isle,
The cliffs look beetling down;
On yesterday they seemed to smile,
And now they wear a frown.

By tender retrospect upborne,
Parting should have no pain;
But still our yearning hearts will mourn
Till Mildred come again.

III

WILDWOOD FLOWERS.

BALLADS.

"When shaws beene sheene and shraddes full fayre,
And leaves both large and longe,
It is merry walking in the fayre forest,
To hear the small bird's songe."

Old Ballad.

THE DEATH OF DANIEL BOONE.

[It is said that Boone went out to watch for deer at a salt lick, and there died alone. I believed this when this ballad was written, but I fear it is a myth.]

Sadly uprose the yellow sun
Upon an autumn morn,
And sadly fell his amber rays
Aslant the ripened corn—
Aslant the ripened maize that stood
Ungathered on the plain,
Whose pluméd tassels proudly waved
Above the heavy grain.

The woods were dyed with gorgeous hues;
The maples flaunted red,
Like the broad banner of a king
When at his army's head;
Long flights of waterfowl were seen
Along the prairie's edge,
Which, circling round in narrowing sweeps,
Sank down among the sedge.

Beside a dark and silent tarn,
A salt tarn wild and gray,
Beneath a gnarléd sycamore
An agéd hunter lay;
The red deer, bursting through the brake,
Unnoticed came and drank,
And all unheeded the black bear
Stalked through the rushes rank.

Upon his white head was the frost,
And on his beard the rime;
His mighty limbs, so stalwart once,
Were shrunken now by time;
His form was bent and gaunt and grim,
And cold his gray eye's gleam,
For shadowy memories came and fled
Like spirits in a dream.

Full many a year ago he crossed
The Alleghany's crest,
The first lone pioneer that trod
The valley of the West—
That vale of matchless loveliness,
With warfare circled round,
Which even then the Indian named
"The dark and bloody ground."

The red man's foray rose again
Before his fading sight,
And many a half-forgotten deed
That marked some border fight;
The elk and bison seemed to troop
Athwart his dying gaze,
As when of yore they frightened fled
Before his rifle's blaze.

Again his heavy bonds he bore
And marched with pinioned hands,
With tranquil brow and steady step,
Among the Indian bands;
And like a storm once more he rushed
Through canebrakes thick and wild,
Once more struck down the forest-chief,
And freed his captive child.

Then one by one rose to his mind
The hunters bold and true,
Till all his long departed friends
Came thronging on his view;
And Clark, the greatest of them all,
Formed for the first command,
Stalked forth with chief-like step and air,
And took him by the hand.

No more he saw—the mists grew thick
Round life's receding shore;
He saw the spirit-land beyond,
Nor dream of life dreamed more.
His faithful stag-hound slowly rose
From where he crouching stayed,
And, lifting high his tawny throat,
Long mournfully he bayed.

A veil upon the gloomy tarn,
The mists of evening float,
While flocks of wild swans marshalled fly,
With sad, sonorous note;
And yet the dusky hound bays deep
Beside his master's form,
Or tries in vain his icy hands
With friendly tongue to warm.

The hunters, guided by the sound,
Came near the dark lake-shore,
And found him stark and cold in death
Beneath the sycamore.
'Twas thus by far Missouri's stream,
When autumn leaves were sere,
As hunters round their firesides tell,
Died Boone the pioneer.

THE BLOODWET GLOVE.

Fair Lilian sits in her lonely bower,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
Her sire's a lord of wealth and power,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

A knight is spurring o'er the plain
Hearts grow cold and blasts grow chill;
Seven men at arms the knight have slain,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

No true knight comes at Lilian's call,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
Seven dark-browed brothers stalk the hall,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

They've brought fair Lilian a bloodwet glove,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
She said, "You've slain my own true love,"
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

They've laid her in the churchyard low,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
Above her grave white roses blow,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

Her father kneels where she is laid,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
Seven sons are naught, my lily maid,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

Coronet, castle and wide demesne,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
I'd give to hear thy voice again,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

But, O to think that a bloodwet glove,
Hearts grow cold and blasts blow chill;
Should be the end of Lilian's love,
Sing roundelay-la, fair ladie.

THE WITCH.

I

She has robbed the rest from my pillow,
And stolen sweet peace from my heart,
The joy that welled in my heart
And the slumbers that steeped my eyelids,
With witchcraft and magical art.

II

She vexed me with dreams at the midnight,
And bore me away to the stars,
The wandering, malefic stars;
She seethed me in steam of the lava
That boiled up from Hecla's red scars.

III

She built me a bower of moonbeams,
With a dome like Kubla Khan's,
A pleasure-dome weird as the Khan's;
But Doubt at the doorway stood sentry;
His pass-word was, "Trust is not man's."

IV

She buried a shaft in my bosom,
That rankles by night and by day,
And blights all the beauty of day;
But behold how she smiles—mark her witchcraft—
How she mocks in a magical way.

V

Now what shall I do with a woman
Who stabs with a wonderful knife,
A poisonous, invisible knife;
Who drives the sleep from my pillow,
And drains all delight from my life?

VI

Shall I make complaint to the judges?
They'll declare she is honest and fair,
They'll call her winsome and fair;
Shall I stir the village to drown her,
Or strangle her with her black hair?

VII

What avail my incantations?
Her glamour is proof against spell,
Her charms overpower my spell;
The enchantress goes smiling and heedless
Of woes that my tongue may not tell.

VIII

Now tell me, ye cold-eyed bystanders!
Must a young man languish and die,
Aye, gasp and wither and die,
With no hope of release from the bondage
And the spell of a witch's dark eye?

IX

Blesséd saints! come break this enchantment,
Though I have to sail over the sea,
Yea, sail o'er the limitless sea,
And wander a desolate exile—
From the weight of this yoke set me free.

THE CAVALIER'S SWORD.

My mistress is the bonny blade
I wedded with my hand;
I love it more than any maid
Who walks this blooming land.

You love your lady's downcast eye;
I love the glances bright,
That from my steel gleam fierce and high
With cold and dazzling light.

You praise your lady's slender waist,
Her rounded, lissome form,
Her spirit meek, her manners chaste,
Her heart so true and warm;

My mistress hath a subtler spell,
By cavaliers adored;
Her troth she keeps; I love her well,
My keen and flashing sword.

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

She had a pleasant morning dream;
Alas! that she should waken;
She lived, she loved, nor did it seem
Her joy could e're be shaken.

Their plighted vows had made them one,
And O! she loved him dearly;
Their course of love had scarce begun,
And it must close so early.

He wore the soldier's sword and plume,
And when the trumpet sounded
It called him to an early doom;—
They brought him to her wounded.

In lingering pain some summer days
His spirit seemed to hover,
And then, in God's mysterious ways,
Edith had lost her lover.

Ah! life is but a broken thread,
That guides we know not whither;
Traced back it leads us to the dead
Through flowers that fade and wither.

"Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
O ma patrie
La plus cherie
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance—
Adieu, France! adieu nos beaux jours!
Le nef qui dejoint nos amours
Na eu de moi que la moitie;
Une part te reste, elle est tèinne;
Je la fiê
A ton amitiè
Pour que de l'autre il te souvienne."

(*Chanson of Mary, Queen of Scots.*)

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS', FAREWELL.

"Adieu, plaisant pays de France."

Farewell, beloved France!
I ne'er shall see thee more;
I cast my last fond glance
On thy receding shore:
Fast fall the salt, salt tears,
That dim my aching eyes,
And spectral forms and fears
Dark o'er my pathway rise.

Before me soon the steeps
Of England's cliffs will loom,
And seem, to her who weeps,
The portals of a tomb;
And Scotland's rugged crags
Will vex my hapless sight,
While this winged dungeon drags
Mary from lost delight.

No more thy joys, dear France!
The idle hours beguile;
No more the pleasant dance
Provokes the wreathéd smile;
Now gone are sportive words,
The laugh, the tale, the song,
Sunshine and flowers and birds,
And pleasure's shining throng.

Whate'er filled eye and ear,
Whate'er cheered heart and mind,
Whate'er seemed most, most dear,
Wretched I leave behind;
O life so sweet, so gay,
With bliss so brimming o'er!
O rapture passed away,
Never to bless me more!

Gone now the airy jest,
The shapely, graceful mien
Of nobles who addressed
Each woman as a queen;
Instead, stern Murray's form,
Dark, rigid, clad in mail,
And lowering as the storm,
Stalks by with aspect pale.

Instead of bending priest,
With whisper soft and low,
Absolving me, released
Henceforth from sin and woe,
Knox, with his strident voice
And awful threatening arm,
Points to the dreadful choice
Of heresy or harm.

Born of a Kingly line,
Brave, beautiful and strong,
What baleful planets shine,
What great misfortunes throng,
To mar the princely grace,
To dim the splendid sheen,
Of Scotland's royal race,
Of Scotland's stricken queen!

Upon the deck I stand,
And through the twilight strain
To see again thy strand
Across the billowy main;
But o'er the dark expanse,
Mist shrouds thee from my view.
O home! O hope! O France!
My France! a last adieu!

THE SONG OF OLAF.

Listen, ye story tellers
Of every age and clime;
Stand in a magic circle
Around the Lord of Rhyme!

Thou comest with runic saga,
My Viking, fierce and bold;
Thy hilt is gold encrusted
And blood is on the gold!

Grimly thou thrusteth forward
To the center of the throng;
O son of Thor and Woden,
Thou art the King of Song!

Thou art not given to dalliance,
And rugged is thy rhyme;
It rings with clang of bucklers,
And frothing flagons' chime!

Winter gave the three teachers,
Thy dam, the ancient pine,
And the salt sea, thy sister,
Who washed thy limbs in brine;

But best beloved and dearest,
The good sword at thy side,
Proven in deadly onslaught
Worthy to be thy bride!

Thy song is of the hemlock,
And of the rushing sea,
And the clash of steel on helmets;
Praise of thy teachers three.

Ha! Ha! the war horse neigheth,
When earth is strewn with slain:
Thou chauntest the blood of warriors
Bounding in every vein!

Grand is thy strange old legend,
O Singer, fierce and wild,
Nursling of storm and maelstrom,
The arrowy lightning's child!

Shout loud then, Son of Woden,
Where the red banner streams
O'er wassail in Walhalla,
When midnight splendor beams.

TO PYRRHA.*

A ROMAN BALLAD BY Q. H. FLACCUS.

(Horace, Book 1, Ode 5)

What lissome lad, perfumed with dripping otto,
Woos thee, on roses, in thy pleasant grotto,
Pyrrha? For whose caresses
Dost bind thy yellow tresses,

Simple in neatness? Alas how often
Thy fickle love and gods he'll try to soften
In vain, and watch with wonder
Thy wind-tost waves and thunder—

That greenhorn—who, thy golden youth enjoying,
Hopes still to find thee fancy free, nor cloying
Of amorous sweets, unheeding
Thy tricksy gusts. But needing

Pity are they whom thou untried deceivest.
O strong Sea God, who on thy wall receivest,
My sodden suit suspended,
Behold my folly ended.

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* See Note C at end of Book.

THE ARGO.

A MINYAN BALLAD.

(Story old ; again retold.)

From fair Iolcos by the sea,
The Minyan heroes bent their prow,
To bring to Greece the Golden Fleece,
Phrixus nailed to the beechen tree
In Ares' grove to quit his vow.

His ghost could not abide in peace,
But haunted Pelias' palace halls,
And, wandering pale, with mournful wail,
Bade him bring back the Sacred Fleece,
And hang it on th' ancestral walls.

Now, royal Jason, Aeson's son,
The rightful heir to Pelias' throne,
An oath had sworn not to return,
(By crafty Pelias' promise won),
Till he had made the Fleece his own.

The Minyan heroes round him came
Whom Centaur Cheiron with him taught
On Pelion's height, to sing and fight,
To wrestle, run and walk through flame,
And crush with club the beast they fought;

The sword and spear in war to wield,
The herbs that heal a wounded friend,
To strike the lyre with soul on fire,
While warriors clash with sword on shield,
Quivers rattle and ashbows bend.

First, Herakles came, strong and brave,
Mighty and sad, to pain enured;
The lion's hide swung from his side,
His voice was kind, his brow was grave,
Weary he seemed of toils endured.

Leda's twin sons, on milk white steeds,
Castor and Pollux fast spurred in;
And Hylas fair, with golden hair;
Ancaios, who in planets reads
What thing shall be, as if't had been;

Zetes and Calais, winged and fleet,
Sons of the North Wind, apt to roam;
Peleus who strove for Thetis' love,
The sea nymph with the silver feet,
And won his bride from surf and foam;

Mopsus, who knows the speech of bird,
The meaning of the raven's croak,
Whose lips repeat the love tale sweet
The ringdove told, that he hath heard
Under the shade of the sacred oak;

Caineus, strongest of mortal men;
Idmon, priest of the Shining One;
Oïleus tall, from his sire's hall;
Telamon taller still, and then
Butes, Pandaion's beautiful son.

Coming, they came o'er mount and dale,
Answering Jason's call from afar,
Gladly to brave tempest and wave,
Peril of rock, billow and gale,
And shock of arms in panoplied war,

To follow the prince who knew not fear,
To hear his cheerful laughter ring,
To see him stand with flashing brand,
And then on the foe in strong career
His mighty form like a torrent fling.

Argus the wise, born by the strand,
Who as a boy in the breakers rolled,
(Whose fingers played with the silver braid
Of Poseidon's robe as it trailed the sand),
Prudent in thought, in action bold,

Brought his brain and his cunning hand
The sharp-beaked bark to plan and build,
And made it fast from keel to mast,
Clamping it tight with nail and band,
While molten pitch its tight seams filled.

Rigged was the ship from stem to sail,
Ready to plunge through trackless deeps;
But neither spur nor whip can stir
This seahorse to lift his wings to the gale,
Or quit his stall on the windy steeps.

Fast he stands on the shingly beach;
Over the gravel he will not crawl,
The ship must dwell under a spell,
That the bounding waves it cannot reach,
Though hard the heroes tug and haul.

Princely Jason fared to the North,
Where Orpheus hid in lonely caves;
"Come, noble friend, your strong help lend
And urge the fateful Argo forth
To ride the crest of the glassy waves."

Orpheus had lost his lovely queen;
But on his golden lyre he played,
Till from the grave the Dark King gave
His wife to the light, but in its sheen
She vanished again from sight—a shade.

Then Orpheus mourned in woods and rocks,
Sore bereaved for his twice lost bride,
While winds wailed low and streams ran slow,
And following trooped the herds and flocks,
And lion and stag crouched at his side.

Orpheus lifted his large, sad eyes,
And in his grasp took Jason's hand;
"A friend's hard need is time for deed,
For vigil, toil, and counsel wise,
For pain and peril by sea and land—

I will follow, and thou shalt lead."
Then Orpheus smote his golden lyre;
With wings of flame, two dragons came,
Each to serve as a hero's steed,
And sped with them like meteor fire.

At fair Iolcos, like a rock,
The Argo rests upon the ground;
With idle hands the builder stands;
While, straggling like a simple flock,
The Minyan chieftains wander round;

When, like a thunderbolt on high
Which hurtles from a driving cloud,
The heroes twain spring to the plain
From dragon-steeds that flash and fly,
And burst upon the startled crowd.

Then Orpheus sang and music made
Till every face was all aglow,
And eyes looked bright and hearts grew light,
And still upon his lyre he played,
Now loud and strong, now soft and low.

The Triton on the swelling wave
Sounds far away his twisted shell;
And murmurous trees and sighing breeze
And echoes from each grot and cave
And scarpéd cliff and seaworn cell

Gave sign the bard had touched and thrilled
Great Mother Earth's broad, beating breast;
That life was there, was everywhere,
That life the world and nature filled,
Obedient to the poet's behest.

Then to the Argo Orpheus spake,
Laying his hand upon the prow,
"Move, good ship, move; the bard's power prove,
And Music's, and for her sweet sake,
Seaward thy way take even now."

Happed then a marvel. The great bark
Straight toward the sea began to glide,
Through sand and turf into the surf,
Sure as an arrow to the mark,
And, plunging, rode the foaming tide.

As when the summer tempest roars,
Tossing the forest with its blast,
Such was the shout that loud rang out
Along the sandy Grecian shores,
As Argo through the billows passed.

The breeze blows fair, the sail is set,
Strong arms bend hard upon the oars,
With wind and tide the waves they ride;
But eyes at home with tears are wet,
As Argo sails from Hellas' shores.

To Pontic Kolchis they are bound,
Far toward the rising of the sun,
But months will go, and seasons flow,
Ere their portentous quest is found,
And years before their cruise is done.

What things they saw, what splendid deeds
The heroes wrought in days of old,
This little verse may scarce rehearse;
The tonsured clerk a huge book reads
Wherein the tale is duly told.

Therein ye find the spells disclosed
That King Aietes did devise,
Jason to foil, with dule and toil;
But Jason wrought the tasks imposed,
And through the Princess won the prize.

No mortal arm could do the deed,
Or 'scape the watchful dragon's harm,
Save through the aid of the fair maid,
Medea, who with mystic rede,
Helped Jason break the fatal charm.

For this fair princess of the land,
Medea, Aietes' daughter wise,
Whose dark hair shone like Night's black throne,
Gave to the prince her lily hand,
And on him looked with loving eyes.

While in the sacred grove they strayed
Medea gave her secret heart,
Entire and swift, a royal gift,
Like any foolish village maid,
Despite her lore and magic art.

From Kolchis with the Fleece they fled,
And hard the Minyans plied the oar
And crowded sail, though roared the gale
And clouds were rushing overhead
And billows beat the rocky shore.

For swifter than the driving blast
And fiercer than the howling storm,
The angry King was following,
With all his galleys rowing fast,
And he in front with threatening form.

"Press hard," he cried; "Our galley's beak
Drive through the Argo's oaken side;
Gold shall be yours, brave Kolchian rowers,
When we have slain the flying Greek,
And in his blood our hands are dyed!"

Then like Bellona, goddess dire,
With beauty awful, yet divine,
On the high stern, with eyes that burn,
Medea stands, and kindles fire,
And to the Gods of Death pours wine.

"Infernal Deities!" she cries,
"Ye force me to a bitter choice;
A brother's blood must stain the flood,
Or else my princely Jason dies;
I hearken to my heart's true voice."

"Bring forth Absyrtus, brother mine,
Fond boy, whom I have nursed on knee;
This hateful knife must take his life,
For Hades claims his blood, not wine,
And his young limbs must strew the sea."

Then as they fled across the main,
Aietes' galleys following fast,
The King's black frown to woe sank down,
When he beheld his dear boy slain,
And on the waves his fair form cast.

The Witch Queen won the Golden Fleece,
The beauteous, dark-browed Kolchian maid;
But with her knife her brother's life
She ended, and thus gave release
To Argo, when pursuit was stayed.

The King went back in grief and pain,
But blood that cries still soaked the deck;
Medea's spell that vanquished Hell
Hid not from sight the dull, red stain
That splashed the boards with gory fleck.

Wonders by land, strange things by sea,
The Minyan Heroes fill with awe;
But on the prow an oaken bough
Showed that the Argo was not free
From bloodguilt and from broken law.

Then Jason voyaged months on days,
Tracking ocean with tireless keel,
With oar and sail, through snow and hail,
Where noontide sun throws slanting rays
That over the misty headlands steal.

Drawn by an unseen Fate, they fled,
To expiate the abhorréd deed;
But peace came not—red was the blot,—
And still, pursued by doubt and dread,
The Heroes urged the white-winged steed.

As Argo sailed along the beach,
The rowers steadily bent their oars;
"The sea is wide," the rowers cried,
"And far, O far, the prow must reach
Or ever it graze the Grecian shores."

On the sharp rocks the Sirens sing;
The salt sea waves crawl to their feet,
With greedy lips to kiss the tips
That rosy peep from sandals that swing
In the surf, where the breakers burst and beat.

The song they sang was sweet, O sweet;
—Bright their cheeks as the pink sea shell—
From pearly throats floated such notes
That the rowers rested, and cried, "Repeat;"
For the music bound them with a spell.

Then Butes' head dropped on his arm—
Woe for Pandaion's beautiful son!—
"Our thews are strong, and life is long,"
He sighed, and, "O brothers, where's the harm
Of sleep for the weary when work is done."

And, one by one, the grasp relaxed
Of sinewy hand on bladed oar;
The heavy lid dropped low and hid
The tired eyes that closed o'ertaxed,
And slowly drifted the ship toward shore.

Then princely Jason seized the helm,
And clear his manly accents rang,
"O brothers, wake, for Hellas' sake,
Ere our bark the breakers overwhelm!"
But sweeter still the Sirens sang.

To Orpheus then, with urgent prayers,
Medea knelt and instant prayed,
"Behold how sleep and numbness creep
Over the long-haired Greeks; ill fares
The Argo now, without thine aid."

"Orpheus!" the dark-browed princess cried,
"Sound loud thy lyre, ere all be lost;
The Argo drifts toward rocky rifts,
Drifts and yields to the treacherous tide,
Like a purple seaweed idly tost."

Orpheus seized his lyre divine;
Strong and full rang out the strain,
"Wake, Heroes, wake, for glory's sake,
Smite with your oars the flashing brine,
That Greece may greet your eyes again."

"Think of your deeds of high renown,
Think of the perils you have passed;
Nor happy Isles, nor Circe's smiles,
In silken chains shall bind you down;
O be not lured to loss at last."

"Mariner!" sang the Siren, Rest
In our harbor where winds are dumb;
A white-armed bride shall grace your side,
Clad in golden tissued vest;
Come to the haven of happiness; Come!"

"Rest!" sang Orpheus, "Such rest is rust,
Rust that bites the edge from the blade;
Your bones will bleach on yonder beach;
And, crouching o'er your forgotten dust,
Will wail for rest the unresting shade."

Then Butes rose as in a maze;
His cheeks were flushed as if with wine;
With hasty stride, over the side
He plunged, and the Sirens caught his gaze
As he sank beneath the swirling brine.

The Minyans fled the rower's bench,
While Jason beat his brawny breast;
The Argo lurched, a raven perched
On her mast head, and a cruel wrench
Heaved the ship like a thing distressed.

The voice of Orpheus, clear and shrill,
Pierced, as the wind that pipes on high,
Dull ears. He sang, "Hear ye the clang
Of the gates of Hell? Feel ye the chill
Of the blast when they open for those who die?"

"Minyan Heroes! Remember Greece,
The vine-clad hill, the white-walled home,
Your tender wives, the happy lives
Ye have lived, will live in well earned peace,
When after toils ye cease to roam."

"Think on the Golden Fleece ye bear,
The precious prize your valor won,
The high renown and glory's crown
In times to come your fame shall wear,
In song and story handed down."

"Bend to the oar once more, ye braves,
O list not to the Sirens' chant,
Think on the pure, and shun the lure
Of the fiends who woo you to your graves;
Strive for the prize the High Gods grant."

When warriors watch the weary night,
And stand on post without relief,
Till trumpets sound the guards' grand round,
Then toss their plumes ready for fight,
So looked the Heroes toward their chief.

The Minyans row with measured plash;
—Blessed rhythm of rescue, hail!—
Its pulse beat saves from cruel graves
The men whose oars through the white foam flash;
And as they leave, the Sirens wail.

IV

THE ROSE.

MELODIES AND THRENODIES.

"Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the *Rose*."

—*Milton.*

"You violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known;
What are you when the *Rose* is blown?"

—*Wotton.*

THE ROSE.

My rose blooms fair; O royal rose,
So sweet and fresh with breath of May,
Thou art the choicest child of spring!
How red thy ruby lips unclose,
How bright the morning of thy day!
At sight of thee the small birds sing,
The greenwood gay its reverence shows,
And all rathe flowers their homage pay;
Thou art the queen of everything!
But that was long ago, and now
An icy hand is on thy brow;
Sad winter reigns, and where art thou?

LOVE'S MORNING STAR.

Beloved! thou art my morning star,
Full robed in radiance, beauty born,
That, flashing in its silver car,
Breaks through the blushes of the morn.

Star of my life! the shades of night
Flee from my feet and backward roll,
And earth grows glad, and heaven more bright,
In the calm splendor of thy soul.

My clouded youth, forlorn and dim,
Felt its first quickening in thy ray,
Then burst into its morning hymn,
Prescient of joy and glorious day.

CHRISTMAS COURTING.

Gem-encrusted gleams the forest
With ice diamonds laden low,
And beneath the traveler's footstep
Crunches crisp the frozen snow.
Springing from the elm's dark column,
Arches o'er the wintry way,
Interlaced, an airy lattice,
Traced with fringe of frosted spray.

Dancing leaps the flickering firelight
From the hearthstone to the floor;
Fervid glow the oaken embers,
Like the ruby's central core;
Gloomy near the pleasant ingle,
Haunted by the demon doubt,
I debate the wavering phantom
And dejection's rabble rout.

Near me sits a modest maiden,
With a sweet and earnest face,
In whose eyes' dark depths are shadows
Of the spirit, and the trace
Of a holier, higher revealing—
How an honest, human pride,
Firmly fixed on truth and duty,
May by grace be glorified.

Slight her fairy form's perfection
In its chaste and classic mould,
As Pygmalion's dream of beauty
Won to life from marble cold.
"O," I murmured, "Could I move her,
Fill her heart with love's soft glow,
Sculptor! I should far outvie thee,—
But she's colder than the snow.

Roaring with a joyous cadence,
Peal the brazen-throated bells,
And the swift sleigh's merry chorus
The full Christmas anthem swells:
Then my heart the omen welcomed—
Could my faltering tongue but tell
How far sweeter than the crystal
Christmas chimes her accents fell!

Till that moment, in her meekness,
She had banished far the thought,
Deeming wealth and power and glory
Made the goal my manhood sought;
Dreaming not I was her captive,
Bound by love and beauty's thrall,
Not divining that I loved her,
Till I knelt and told her all.

Now another joyous Christmas
On the world its splendor showers,
But the snow wreath breathes the perfume
Of the wreath of orange flowers;
And the sleigh bells' merry jangle
And the tower's sonorous chime,
Find a fuller, finer meaning
In the happy aftertime.

SYMPATHY.

When throbs the aching heart
With griefs it may not tell,
O let me bear a part;
Believe, I know them well.

When sorrow's founts distill
A potion to be quaffed,
Though bitter, let me fill
My cup and share the draught.

Strive on, brave heart, hope, trust,
Be faithful to the end;
The soul sinks not in dust;
Lean on me, tender friend.

TRANSMUTATION.

Upon the noble river,
The ancient, storied Rhine,
The lights of evening shiver
In a dark day's decline.

The wearied boatman drifting,
As in a waking dream,
Beholds a castle lifting
Its towers above the stream.

Listless he lies, half gazing
At the eyried turrets high
And the rocky stronghold raising
Its form against the sky.

Sombre and dark it lowereth,
While the gray donjon keep
Its dusky shadow poureth
Upon the pathway steep.

It frowneth like the vision
Of an evil life that's sped,
When memory does its mission
With record of the dead.

No ray of sunshine tender
Softens the sombre scene,
Till, with his royal splendor,
As a monarch decks his queen,

The dying Day King flingeth
Forth with a liberal hand
A flood of light that bringeth
Joy to the darksome land.

With ruby gleams each tower,
Gold streams through every hall,
Brightens my lady's bower,
Bathes battlement and wall,

Till lustrous shines each chamber,
And, with rare jewels crowned,
The keep, in robes of amber,
Soft smiles where erst it frowned.

And, springing from light arches,
The castle seems to rise,
Like a palace in the marches
Neath Andalusian skies;

Like the celestial city
St. John in Patmos saw,
The realm of love and pity,
Without a human flaw.

There all the laureled garlands
That floating fancy wreathes,
And the promise of those starlands
Where inspiration breathes,

Grow finer, purer, rarer ;
As Dante in his dream
Saw Beatrice grow fairer,
In heaven's effulgent beam.

'Twas thus my spirit darkly,
Beneath the clouds of fate,
Lifted its outlines starkly
'Gainst scorn and wrong and hate,

Till thy soul's sunshine, breaking
Athwart the shadows grey,
Made bright with light its waking
To golden, royal day.

THE CONSOLER.

Belovéd! When I think how calm,
How true, how pure, thou art,
The thought comes like a sovereign balm
Poured on a bruiséd heart.

My soul the blasts of passion parch,
As sweeps the Simoom hot,
Save where, like palms, thy virtues arch
With verdure one cool spot.

When anguish wrings, when sorrows thrill,
My burthen thou dost share,
Thy voice hath art, thy hand hath skill,
To banish every care.

When murky disappointments lower,
When pain and grief bear sway,
Thy very lightest touch hath power
To charm them all away.

STEADFAST.

All the homage my whole heart could render
Was laid at thy feet in our youth,
With a passion pure, constant and tender,
And a trust in thy crystalline truth.

Though care, disappointment and sorrow
Have darkened my days with their gloom,
Hope points to a happier morrow,
When the flowers of evening shall bloom.

But whatever of fate may betide me,
Its bolts will assail me unmoved,
Since thy spirit stands proudly beside me,
With its love and its loyalty proved.

THE YOUNG HUNTSMAN.

'Stay, wayfarer, stay, hast thou seen a young huntsman,
In yon rocky valley, lone gorge in the mountains,
Where leaps the bold torrent, with rush of wild waters;
Hast thou seen my brave lad, holding hard in the leashes
Two sleuth hounds tight straining, and panting for quarry,
Come striding along the steep slope of the ridges
And grey spurs that buttress Mill Mountain's high backbone?
He bursts through the laurel, his tread like Apollo,
The blast of his horn down the valley far ringing,
The wild echoes waking from cliff, crag and cavern.
Ah yes! you would know him, thin flanked and broad shouldered,
Tall, straight as a sapling, strong, surefooted, eager;
His face like the morning when blow the fresh breezes
And young dawn is flushing the East with its roses.
See, his brown hair is damp with the dew of the dayspring;
His hazel eyes, flecked with a scintillant amber,
Are translucent wells of clear truth and soft beauty,
Out-matching the stars that are sinking to slumber.
He moves like the morning, yea, King of the morning,
As fair, pure, and sweet as the dawn in its coming.

No more, no more, no more; no more, alas, forever,
Down the piney slopes and through the mountain gorges,
Will Albert drive the deer, or drink with welcoming breath,
O hills, the free air blowing o'er your grassy glades,
With balm of spruce and cedar laden, or fragrant
With the dainty sweetbrier's delicate breath;
No more with radiant face look toward the rosy dawn,
Or greet the imperial East with heart all glowing;
No more, no more, no more, forever!

I hear his horn's clear call. O'er leagues of land and sea,
Far down the lonely valley where I stand, it comes
From realms beyond the stars, from yon exalted crest
Of truth's fair heights, that lifts in living light,
Bright with the dawn of heaven. Yea, lad, I gladly come,
In answer to thy call, if strength to me be given
In thy sure track, with footstep tremulous, to tread,
Until I stand beside thee, grasp thy steady hand,
And with thee walk in joy the Hills Delectable.
O fair and well loved youth, my spirit follows thine,
Forever, yea, forever, evermore.

QUEENS OF THE PAST.

Queens of the past! Do I envy the ages
That believed that your beauty was sent from above,
As solace, or scourge, to the warriors and sages,
Who shipwrecked their souls with insatiate love?

Thou, Cleopatra, for Antony dying!
I know yet another far fairer than thee;
The west wind repeats to my heart her faint sighing;
She sighs, O ye zephyrs; her sighs are for me!

Helen, of heroes the queen and subduer!
Worthier the guerdon of beauty than thee,
There is another, tenderer, truer,
Watching and waiting for me, ah for me!

O uncreated! thou goddess upspringing;
Divine Aphrodite, from foam of the sea!
Thy handmaiden comes to me smiling and singing,
As memory leads her all lovely to me.

Thy girdle she's playfully swinging and flinging,
Like a toy of her girlhood to me, ah to me;
Her charms to my arms and her beauty she's
bringing,
Fairer, O goddess of beauty, than thee!

DIVINEST OF WOMEN.

O my belovéd,
My darling, my angel,
Bright bird of the morning,
Whose chirp was so pleasant,
Whose song was so thrilling,
Whose silence was golden,
Thou wast a sweet singer!
Ah, why art thou silent?

Never another,
No, not Cleopatra,
Not Helen, half goddess,
Nor yet any other
Whom poet hath sung of,
Or dreamer hath dreamed of
In visions of morning
When forms of fair women
Have burst on his seeing,
Compel the soul surges,
The tides of my being,
To lift their crests toward her,
Like thee, of all women,
The noblest, most charming;
Fair sister of angels,
Divinest of women!

To have thee and hold thee
Were better than empire,
Were better than glory,
Were a foretaste of heaven,
O joy of my spirit!
I have held and possessed,
Possessed and adored thee,
I have treasured and loved thee;
I cannot now lose thee,
I will not now lose thee,
I will cling to and hold thee,
Forever and ever.

For thee, through the gloom
And the valley of shadows
I would walk, though black Hades,
With portals of horror,
Should yawn to receive me.
Ah, sooner than lose thee,
I would tread the hot embers,
Where ghosts of perdition
Mow, mutter and threaten.
If the universe hold thee,
My spirit shall find thee,
By leaping its chasms,
By flights through abysses,
By an eternal upward,
A striving for Heaven,
Where thou wilt be surely,
O sister of angels,
Divinest of women!

O stretch forth thy hand
From the lattice of Heaven,
To where, my Belovéd,
In gloom and the darkness
Of Earth, I look upward!
Through the mist and the murk
I gaze, O how tenderly,
Reverently, lovingly,
Waiting thy coming.
Be thou the swift angel
To meet my worn spirit,
When baffled and beaten
By sin in life's battle,
A message of mercy
Shall rescue the vanquished.
Thy white hand shall lift me,
Who loved and still loves thee
Thy strength bear me upward
To realms of the ransomed,
O guardian, thrice saintly,
Fair sister of angels,
Divinest of women.

V

MARGUERITES.

"Of all the flowers in the mead
Then love I most these flowers white and red,
Such as men callen daisies in our town."

—*Chaucer.*

"The little daisy that at evening closes."

—*Spenser.*

MY LADY.

I named her, since I did not further dare
To call her, as I would, by title tender,
"My Lady," hoping she would kindly wear
This token of the homage that I render.

And so about her, as some marble column
The morning glory decks with varied lustre,
All thoughts and aspirations, sweet or solemn,
All hopes and fears still climb and cling and cluster.

On other tongues she may have titles higher,
Wherein their admiration would enshrine her,
But symbol of all charms that men desire
And bind the heart, "My Lady" is the finer.

To me it means, for wounds, a balm and healing,
And for the sinking soul a resurrection,
Surcease of strife and friendship's noble feeling,
The end of doubt, the sweet sway of affection.

MY LADY'S NAME.

When I speak of my lady to women and men,
When I speak to my lady before her fair face,
When I fondly address her with tongue or with pen,
I use the strong name of her honorable race.

But O when I lift up my heart from the sod,
And it utters its voices, the word is divine,
It phrases this beautiful handmaid of God
In terms of its own, and claims her as "mine."

Yes, in dreams of the day, and dreams of the night,
In the silence profound of my desolate hours,
She comes like a vision tender and bright,
The fairest of women, the queen of the flowers.

Ah, then I may speak with unloosened tongue,
To the vision I see in her love-gilded shrine,
And my heart in the song that the ages have sung
Will repeat the wild echo, "Thou'rt mine, only
mine."

LIFE'S PUZZLE.

O heart, why dost thou beat so hard
Against thy prison bars?
Thy wings will break against the guard
That shuts thee from the stars.

The soul that from its hermitage
Toward heaven would soar upborne,
Must, like the bird that scorns its cage,
Sink down with plumage torn.

Accept thy fate, poor wayward thing;
What right hast thou to bliss?
Time ends its pageant—death will bring
The meaning of all this.

But O how long the hours seem,
How dark the little space,
And life how like an ugly dream,
Unlighted by her face!

HYMETTUS HILL.

King Summer sets his golden throne
On fair Hymettus hill,
Which, girdled with a fairy zone,
Rises right royally and lone,
Like some strong human will.

Mine eyes upon its wild marsh waste
Will never rest again,
Nor e'er my roving fancy haste
This Bee-Land's bittersweet to taste,—
Its mingled bliss and pain.

THE QUEEN.

There was a queen: wide was her sway
O'er landscape green, o'er summer day,
O'er hearts of men, or grave or gay;
A queen alway!

And O that queen was passing fair,
And bright the gold sheen of her hair;
Hers, grace of mien and beauty rare;
O fair, too fair!

Brave suitors came from East, from West,
To stir love's flame in her white breast;
By all, her name was blessed, as best—
The very best!

A pilgrim gray stood at her gate;
He came that way—it was his fate;
"O lady, may I stand and wait,
E'en at thy gate?"

"The winds blow sharp, their blasts sweep chill,
They weave a warp of music shrill;
I have a harp to work my will;
It will, it will."

"O minstrel old, sit by my hearth,
The night is cold; come share our mirth;
Thy speech is bold; but show its worth,
For worth is worth."

"When Paynim guile quelled our crusade,
In Cyprus Isle," he answer made,
"A little while my steps were stayed;
I dreaming stayed!"

"There at a shrine, with leafy screen,
A form divine, a glorious queen,
Made this harp mine—Venus, I ween,
That Goddess Queen!"

He smote the strings; the music rang,
And words with wings soared as he sang:
'Tis Love that sings! His hopes will hang
On how Love sang.

"O bard mine own," the bright queen cried,
"Thou, thou alone, here at my side
Shalt share this throne; I'll be thy bride;
Alone thy bride!"

She gives her hand; she gives her heart;
The bard will stand, touched by her art,
A figure grand! This is love's part;
Such is Love's art!

LITTLE LADY.

Little lady, why deny me?
Why so coy and I so eager?
Friendship's diet is too meagre;
If you trust me, why not try me?
I'll be true, as thou art dearest;
Tell me, faint heart, what thou fearest?
Do not fly me; why not try me?

Little lady, pray surrender;
You will never know another,
Be he lover, friend, or brother,
Who will feel a love as tender;
Who'll so shield thee, honor, cherish,
Till this world's sad pageant perish;
Pray surrender; nay, surrender.

SWEET MARGUERITE.

My lady is in town; all hail to her;
Let incense rise, rare frankincense and myrrh,
Odors of all things sweet,
Faint vetiver and tea rose, greet
Thee, sweetest sweet,
Sweet Marguerite!

Let joy expand and music fill the ear;
Glad earth make melody; I gladly hear
My heart, in every beat,
Echoes of that dear voice repeat;
Again I meet
Sweet Marguerite.

O splendor of the golden day arise!
Thou art not brighter than my lady's eyes,
Nor than her smiles that meet
The lover kneeling at her feet;
Thy little feet,
Sweet Marguerite!

VETIVER.

Delicate, faint and fine
Is Vetiver,
As the perfume of old wine,
As that little glove of thine,
As the first flower of the year.

Delicate, fine and faint
Is Vetiver,
As the legend of a saint,
With never an earthly taint,
With never a mortal fear.

Subtle and sweet and strong
Is Vetiver;
What powers to it belong!
Its fragrance hath sight and song
To draw the distant near.

Subtle and strong and sweet
Is Vetiver;
It is mighty and fleet,
It hath wings, it hath feet,
To bring thine image here.

Fatal thy sweets that thrill,
Rare Vetiver!
That bind the wrestling will,
And the soul with the senses fill
To breed hopes so deadly dear.

VI

LAUREL AND MYRTLE.

"How long, O Lord, how long!"

'Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown—."

—*Lycidas.*

FLETCHER OF SALTOUN.

A PRELUDE.

I

Fletcher of Saltoun's wisest saw
Said, "Let me make the songs,
And they who will may frame the law;
I'll right my people's wrongs."

II

When freedom languishes she'll hear
With joy my trumpet call,
And Cæsar's soul shall quake with fear
Within his guarded hall.

III

Sentries will wake upon their posts,
Whene'er its clear notes ring;
And vain are usurpation's boasts,
While soaring spirits sing.

IV

Tyrants may ply the rack, the scourge,
Or forge the galling chain;
Fetters shall fall; I sound their dirge
In freedom's martial strain.

V

The wrong may lift its gilded lies
For worship on each shrine;
True hearts will pay no sacrifice,
While live these songs of mine.

THE TORCH OF LIBERTY.

Our patriot sires drew down from heaven
The fire divine of liberty;
They heard it in the thunder crash,
They seized it from the lightning's flash,
To them and their the boon was given
Forever to be free.

They proudly placed in freedom's fane
The sacred torch of liberty;
Its radiant light beamed o'er the world,
Bright blazoned on the flag unfurled,
Which martyr blood, poured forth like rain,
Bought for the brave and free.

Be this the quenchless, vestal flame
Our swords shall guard with jealousy,
And 'round its altar, hand in hand,
Let States, like sister sovereigns, stand,
While loyal hearts, with one acclaim,
Declare that man is free.

Its subtle, subterranean fires
Shall silent cross the stormy sea,
Till force and fraud and thrones and kings
Are cast aside as noxious things,
And nations in harmonious choir
Proclaim the world is free.

1854.

JOHN MITCHELL.

He was a glorious Celt; his soul was free,
And felt his country's wrongs, but not her fears
Of that proud Sassenach supremacy,
The seed and fruit of Erin's woes and tears.

His nature, rugged as some granite range,
Which lifts its crest to meet the tempest blast,
A front presented, sullen, lofty, strange,
A druid's shadow on a dull age cast.

O, Mitchell! well thy spirit knew to sing
Down the long vista of a martial age,
Whose keynote in thy war cry seemed to ring,
Whose tumults in thy bosom swelled with rage.

He hurled defiance at the mighty foe,
Whose iron heel was on his country's neck;
His thunders shook the lethargy of woe,
His lightnings blazed around the shattered wreck.

But, ah too strong the alien's mailéd hand!
The countless years of servitude too strong!
The patriot sinks with his belovéd land,
Beneath the immemorial reign of wrong.

THE FARMER'S GRANGE.

Air:—The Shan Van Vocht.

I

O! shall the railroads rule the land?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
Shall the railroads rule the land?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
They shall not rule the land,
Nor keep the upper hand,
For the people will withstand,
Says the Farmers' Grange;
We won't crouch at the command
Of the swindling, murd'rous band,
For the people will withstand,
Says the Farmers' Grange.

II

O! we have asked our rights in peace,
Says the Farmers' Grange.
We have asked in vain for peace,
Says the Farmers' Grange.
O! we have prayed for peace,
But your troublings will not cease,
And your villainies increase,
Says the Farmers' Grange;
We have prayed in vain for peace
To the men who rob and fleece;
We are bound to have release,
Says the Farmers' Grange.

III

And where will the true men meet?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
Where will the true men meet?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
O! where will all true men meet
And their true oaths there repeat,
And the brethren all then greet?
Says the Farmers' Grange;
On the field of unreaped wheat,
In the barn and in the street,
And they mean not to be beat,
Says the Farmers' Grange.

IV

Then what will these true men do?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
What will the true men do?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
They will show a thing or two
To the bribing, swindling crew,
And give every man his due,
Says the Farmers' Grange.
They'll begin the thing anew,
And give every man his due,
And do justice to the true,
Says the Farmers' Grange.

V

And what color will they wear?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
What color will they wear?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
What color shall I say
But the blue, mixed with the grey;
It will make a stout array,
Says the Farmers' Grange:
No Craydee Mobiliay
Will suit our time of day,
But the blue mixed with the grey,
Says the Farmers' Grange.

VI

And will Columbia then be free?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
Will Columbia then be free?
Says the Farmers' Grange.
Yes! Columbia shall be free
From the centre to the sea;
So! Hurrah for Liberty!
Says the Farmers' Grange;
Columbia shall be free
From the centre to the sea,
So! Hurrah for Liberty!
Says the Farmers' Grange.

THE STRIKE ENDED.

(A VOICE FROM HOMESTEAD.)

King Capital hath won the day,
And set his heel on Labor's neck,
And Wealth resumes her ancient sway;
The vanquished worker must obey,
Low crouching at her beck.

"Order again in Warsaw reigns,"
With iron jaws still grinds the mill;
While Justice, sneering in her fanes,
Forges for power the law's strong chains,
To bind the human will.

The lion, on the open plain,
His wily keeper's limbs would rend;
But, caged, he chafes, with angry mane,
And gnaws his prison bars in vain—
To hunger, rage must bend.

And thou, poor starving wretch, dost know
That all thy sufferings were for naught;
For Wealth hath said, "Let it be so."—
Let the poor eat their bread in woe,
Which tearful toil hath bought.

Your masters loudly, proudly, tell
That ye are free, nor scourge, nor rod,
With force the body can compel,
Where dwells, as in a citadel,
The soul—a spark from God.

Are ye then free, but must not speak
When agony the spirit bows?
Sit in dumb woe and let want wreak
Its ravage on the pallid cheek—
So much the law allows.

Since ye are free, be ye content
With filthy rags and mouldy crust;
By freedom—to the poor—is meant
Toil till the upright soul is bent
And sinks into the dust.

Bow to the yoke; be calm, be still;
Your masters' hearts are hard as stone;
For how can av'rice gorge its fill,
How can oppression work its will,
Without you sweat and groan?

Their ample arms in one embrace
Clasp close the whole of humankind,
Save that poor starving kindred race
Who stare them daily in the face,
To whom their eyes are blind.

Yes, blind the eyes that will not see,
And deaf the ears that will not hear!
Foul hypocrites in heart are ye,
Who vaunt afar your charity,
And trample on the near.

One argument they heed—the drum—
When glittering pikes throng at the gate,
And armèd men, with bodeful hum,
Come, as the legioned locusts come,
To avenge, to desolate.

With gun in hand, ask what you may,
They'll grant you that and offer more;
They fear the people's stout array,
They dread rebellion's bloody fray
And insurrection's roar.

Trust then no more to servile prayer
For justice from your cruel lords;
Come like the wild beast from your lair,
The belt draw tight, the arm make bare,
And use your whetted swords.

MAM'SELLE GUILLOTINE.

SONG OF THE ANARCHIST.

I

Thou art a fine lady, Mam'selle Guillotine;
Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!
Thy ways are so killing, thy glance is so keen,
Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!
Thy slim fingers bind to the block for the blade,
And as bright as its sheen
Is thy face, O my queen,
When gayly thou endest our last promenade
And sendest our souls to the nethermost shade
(With heads in a basket and hearts in a row).
But O for the bliss
Of thy sweet last kiss!
Yet we'll laugh as we quaff
To thy health; so, ho, ho!
Ha, ha! Ho, ho!
Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!

I

But when the time comes, Mam'selle Guillotine,
Ah, ah, ah! Oh, oh, oh!
For the wrenching of hearts, thou'lt be there, I ween;
Ah, ah, ah! Oh, oh, oh!
For the breaking of hearts is, I fancy, thy trade,
And thy garb and thy mien
Are the stateliest e'er seen,
Befitting the form of the beautiful maid
Who last clasped the neck of him who hath prayed
(With heads in a basket and hearts in a row)
And gave him the bliss
Of her last sweet kiss.
So we sigh, as we die,
"Here's to death;" Oh, oh, oh!
Ah, ah! Oh, oh!
Ah, ah, ah! Oh, oh, oh!

SUMMER MUSINGS.

The evening is warm and drowsy,
And the grasshopper loudly sings,
And sweetly falls on the weary ear
The hum of a thousand wings—
Of the myriad wings of insects
That flash in the setting sun,
Till sheen and irised shimmer
Stream mingled into one.

The beaks of the birds are drooping,
Their twitter just meets the ear,
But the katydid pipes her ceaseless note,
Monotonous, shrill, and clear;
And I dreamily stand and listen
On the maple-crested hill,
While memory casts a sad eclipse
On a faint and thwarted will.

Oh! for the fabled lotus
That takes from pleasure the past,
Till the vivid and beautiful present
Shuts out its shadows vast,
And fills the eye with the glitter
And the ear with the hum of a fly,
While the deeds of our chosen chieftains
Vanish from sight and die.

Oh! for the blessed nepenthe
Which can teach the serf to forget
That his race is the line of heroes,
That the eyes of his women are wet
For the warriors they sent forth to battle,
For the martyrs they sent forth to die,
While he lives with his shackles upon him,
And utters to heaven no cry.

DEFEAT.

1866.

The bow is broken, and the spear is shattered,
And all our mighty leaders are laid low;
Our war-worn legions to the winds are scattered
Before the hosts of an insulting foe.

The chariots are o'erthrown, the sword is rusting
That bore the dint of many a knightly blow;
And hearts that bowed before thee, sad, yet trusting,
Look up through tears—it is so dark below.

The hand that wrought such miracles of valor
Is gyved with steel behind the dungeon-bar;
The brow is blanching with the prison-pallor
That flushed exultant in the front of war.

Those who have conquered treat us like dumb cattle,
And herd and goad, where'er they choose to drive,
Men who have breathed the fiery breath of battle,
The dauntless comrades who the wreck survive.

We know, thank God, that now means not forever,
That death can give us but a moment's pain—
A plunge into the dark mysterious river,
To join beyond our band of martyred slain.

And do they think to breathe is then so gainful,
That we will hug a slavish life in chains;
To cross the stream, like Jackson, were less painful,
Or fall like him who led on Shiloh's plains.

We look not back with shame; our deeds were
glorious;
God weigheth all; man's scope is incomplete;
Earth chanteth hymns alone to the victorious;
He smiteth victory, and may bless defeat.

THE GETTYSBURG DEAD.

[An answer to the threat to plough up the graves of Confederates buried at Gettysburg. After these lines were written, the ladies of Richmond, Virginia, removed the bodies of our soldiers from Gettysburg to Hollywood Cemetery. They have been diligent in all good works, for they have loved much.]

They call to the Southrons from the North,
"Come, take your dead away,
Or we'll plough the sod
And break the clod
That cover the rebel clay."

The loyal hands that carried the flag,
The men who wore the blue,
On whatever earth
They had their birth,
They are counted good and true.

They raise for their own the sodded graves,
And range them row by row;
And the billowy grounds
Lift up in mounds—
The furrows of death and woe.

And thus with proud acclaim is filled
The cemetery wide,
While high o'er the graves
Splendidly waves
The banner for which they died.

Our dead died too for the dear-loved land
Whose soil had given them birth,
And where'er they fell
It served them well—
A handful of mother-earth.

No pious hands have lifted the dust
Of men who nobly died,
But they sleep a sleep
As sweet and deep
As if urned in marble pride.

A voice by the ear of faith is heard,
"My people keep your trust;
Behold with your eyes
Beyond the skies
That your heroes are not dust."

Their home is with those who fought for truth,
For God, for fatherland;
With the blest they dwell
And not where swell
These battle-scarred mounds of sand.

They live on the lips of Seraphim
And on the tongues of men;
In the unheeded grave,
Or 'neath the wave,
Their glory will bloom again.

Then, tender mother! weep not thy boy,
Though no stone record his name;
In brave hearts he'll dwell,
When minstrels tell
His story of deathless fame.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

I know our nation's vernal bloom is over;
Vanished the springtide's dear, delicious days,
When simple toil amid the fragrant clover,
With youth and health and hope, gave God the praise—
Ah! shall we walk again in virtue's ways?

They say the storm has ceased its angry motion
Alcyone is sitting by the sea,
Her bird auspicious brooding on the ocean;
That peace is coming back to you and me—
But yet, I ask you, are our people free?

They tell me Ceres pours her horn of plenty,
That barns are brimmed with heavy sheaves of gold,
One sack is sown, the reaper gathers twenty,
The marvels of our wealth tongue hath not told—
But have we now the rights we had of old?

They say our white-winged commerce breaks the
barrier
Of earth's remotest limits for her spoil,
And laden like a bee, far flying carrier,
Brings tribute back of wine and spice and oil—
But brings she back content with all her toil?

Tell me, O Messenger, absolved from error!
Shall we e'er see again the days of old,
When sovereignty was swayed in love, not terror,
Duty was strong, and honest worth was bold,
And mighty truth prevailed, not sordid gold?

PATRICK HENRY.

O grand young tribune of our western land,
Who first defied the high embattled might
Enshrined in church and planted on the height
Of kingly sanctity, at thy command,
Like Joshua who bade the sun to stand
In his celestial course for Israel's light,
The monarch's power was stayed, and human right
Smote haughty Gibeon with a heavy hand!

And thou, the very voice of eloquence,
As if some god spake in thine accents clear,
Didst call to liberty her chosen race
And hurl the tyrant from his pride of place;
—A simple man, and sweet, and yet a seer,
Heaven sent, to be thy people's strong defense!

THE PATRIOT SOUTH.

I

Look backward and before thee, patriot South,
At the clear prospect of thy prime
And the full splendor of the after time,
—Though battle-scarred and wet with tears—
And lay thy finger on thy silent mouth;
Forget regrets and banish idle fears,
And greet with words of welcome all the coming years!

II

For who can rob thee of thy heritage
Of memorable deeds and thought,
By which with blood our liberties were bought
And a great federal nation born,
Which, strengthening in each successive age,
To the whole world, despite the tyrant's scorn,
Hath heralded the light of freedom's stirring morn.

III

And who shall dare to put upon thee shame,
Sith thou hast met the world in arms,
Nor shunned the shock, nor yielded to alarms,
But when the nations joined the hunt,
Still stood at bay and won immortal fame
By peerless chivalry, when front to front,
Thou'st met unblenched thy fivefold foe in battle's
brunt.

IV

Thou hadst a dream, a mighty federation,
Whose sovereign states looked not beyond
The strict intent and spirit of the bond
To which they had given a free assent,
Thus drawing into one grand constellation
These many separate stars, which henceforth went
In heavenly harmony, a cosmic parliament.

V

This was thy vision — a great federation
Of States which held, without a flaw,
Their Statehood, and dispensed their civil law
Within their realms, yet to the world
Stood up Titanic — a Briarean nation,
Solid against Olympian lightnings hurled —
Where'er its starry banner was on high unfurled.

VI

The poles on which should turn thy polity
Were sovereign selfhood in the State,
By its own will its acts to regulate,
Bounded but by the compact framed;
And next, before the law, equality;
So that dependence should not once be named,
Nor in the nation should the weakest State be
shamed.

VII

As when, with earthquake, bursts Vesuvius, crashes
The thunderbolt, the lightning strikes,
And the volcano breaks its rocky dikes,
Pouring red floods o'er field and plain,
And buries cities in its showers of ashes,
So happed it when war, with its horrid train,
Dissolved thy noble dream, and left a nation slain.

VIII

Thy hedge is broken, and the wild beasts ravage
Thy garden and vineyard; desolate
Are thy high places, and the hand of fate
Is heavy on thee; then a swarm,
Foul as a Tartar horde, and yet more savage,
Rush from their hive to rend thy mangled form,
And suck thy streaming blood while yet the quarry's
warm.

IX

But, on thy fields of combat, not more splendid
Shone thy stern valor, baffling fate,
Until it sank beneath o'erwhelming weight,
Than beamed thy dauntless fortitude,
When hope itself grew pale, and all seemed ended
Beneath the reign of misrule which ensued—
But steadfast still thou'st stood, in triple mail endued.

X

Constant and true to every sound tradition
Of freedom, current in thy blood—
That Anglo-Norman strain which has withstood
Through centuries all lawless power,
And held with polar fixedness its mission—
Thou hast borne every wrong, and waited for the hour
When thou could'st crush the nettle, and thus grasp its flower.

XI

Whilst wildly raged the social revolution,
With a wise patience for thy guide,
Thy hand hath checked the despot's haughty stride
And anarchy's unlicensed sway,
With one appeal—that to the Constitution—
And thou hast held to freedom's ancient way,
Until, for thee, at last there dawns a brighter day:

XII

The dayspring from on high which wakes the nation
To stay corruption at its fount
And hold its servants to a strict account,
Enforcing probity and right,
And with strong bit to curb centralization,
Restoring commonwealths their lawful might,
Which seemed forever quenched in blackest central night.

XIII

Upon the land now breathes an inspiration
Of sweet charity, new-born again,
And reason returning to her lordly reign;
So that the promise of our prime
Still lives; and, to the loftiest station,
From lowly sheepfolds — for events thus chime
With heaven's will — is raised a man ripe for the time:

XIV

A ruler, calm and strong and resolute,
Self-poised, nor bent on selfish ends,
And knowing neither enemies nor friends
In duty's full and fair discharge;
But striking boldly at the evil root
Of falsehood, and, with purpose pure and large,
Smiting in front corruption's brazen helm and targe.

XV

Such then our hope — a people roused to action,
With conscience deeply, strongly, stirred,
Demanding honest deed as well as word,
And equal justice and unsullied hands
And the whole country's weal, instead of faction;
Thus shall consent be forged by love to bands
Stronger than force's fetters, or power's harsh commands.

XVI

Thus in the march of time and long procession
Of coming ages, year on year,
We mark the great republic's proud career,
Like Philip's phalanx, manifold,
With bucklers linked, one front against aggression;
Till freedom's perfect vision is unrolled,
And man, with eye unsealed, its glories shall behold.

VII

BRAMBLE AND BERRY.

"Hangs odes upon hawthorns,
And elegies on brambles."

—*As You Like It.*

"Scarlet hips and stony haws
Or blushing crabs or berries that emboss
The bramble."

—*The Task.*

THE MASTER.

AN IMITATION.

Q. Tell me, O Sage! What is the true ideal?
A. A man I knew,—a living soul and real.
Q. Tell me, my friend! Who was this mighty master?
A. The child of wrong, the pupil of disaster.
Q. Under what training grew his lofty mind?
A. To cold neglect and penury resigned.
Q. What honors crowned his works with wealth and praise?
A. Patience and faith and love filled all his days.
Q. And when he died what victories had he won?
A. Hope and humility—his work well done.
Q. What mourning nations grieved above his bier?
A. A sorrowing eye dropped there a loving tear.
Q. But History, then, will consecrate his sleep?
A. His name is lost; angels his record keep.

THE RETURN OF YOUTH.

O for the dews of the morning!
O for the flowers of Spring,
When bird choirs give tremulous warning,
Ere the groves with melody ring!
Could we but bring,
By the lyre's harmonious string,
Or our prayers all vainly offered,
Your uncloying sweets again,
We would purchase with our pain
The gifts divine that Zeus then proffered,
Great Zeus who now our incense spurneth:
But not again,
But not again,
Our youth returneth.

Spring cometh back with its blooming,
Morn will return with its dews,
But the hours all pleasures entombing,
To reopen their portals refuse.
We stand and muse
And the fleeting moments lose,
While revolves the hinge close swinging
Crystal gates upon our track,
Through which vainly we look back,
And hear the seasons singing, singing;
"In vain, in vain, the sad soul yearneth,
We come not back,
We come not back,
Youth ne'er returneth."

Grieve not for snow in thy tresses;
Mourn not thy pallor of brow;
Greet each sign which frankly confesses
The joys that have fled; do not vow
That Fate e'en now,
In her bounty doth allow
Plenteous meed of favors royal,
Making earth elysium, the kiss,
And the golden house of bliss,
And youth's large vision, lovely, loyal;
No more the languid eye discerneth
The joys we miss
Of early bliss;
Youth ne'er returneth.

Boast not the moon's rounded splendor;
Fruit repays not the fall of the leaf;
The thin crescent for me, and the tender,
Green spring, all unconscious of grief;
Alas, too brief!
Seek in song, tired soul, relief;
Make lament for days departed,
When our emerald slippered youth,
Jocund, trustful, bright with truth,
Came tripping blithe and single-hearted;
Its torch reversed no longer burneth;
When frolic youth
Hath gone, in sooth
He ne'er returneth.

Read we aright the old story?
The Earth-Queen, bewailing her child,
Won Persephone back to the glory
Of sunshine and zephyr, and mild
Demeter smiled
When wan Hades was beguiled,
And the rescued girl upspringing
From the arms of black-browed Dis,
Happy in her great release,
Advanced with heavenly music singing:
"O rapturous soul, at last that learneth
The Gods give peace!
By their release
Bright youth returneth."

Waste not then, in vain repining,
Moments that so quickly flee;
Hesperus calls; yet is shining
The sun that sinks toward the sea.
Come, Phantasy!
Help my saintly love and me,
In the fabrics sunset buildeth,
To see palaces as fair
As the rosy dome of air
That Eos for Tithonus gildeth.
Restored, the soul its wage there earneth,
With Gods to share
The mansion fair
Where youth returneth.

THE FRENCH MARKET.

I

Pedro Olivio, young, lithe and strong,
Stands in the market with insolent air;
With elbows akimbo, scanning the throng,
He tosses the curls of his raven-black hair.
There's a smile on his lip, but the gleam in his eye
Plays like the sheen of a Damascene blade,
And the girls who just glance, as they come tripping by,
Turn from the beauty which makes them afraid.
Olive his cheek, but the blood of the grape
Has flushed it a little and given a glow —
Young Dionysus took on this shape —
Means he now revelry, mischief or woe?
Some say that Pedro is out of his sphere,
Blue-blooded, gentle-born, cradled in pride,
Cadiz his birthplace, his father the peer
Of any hidalgo, who took for his bride
The heiress of mines, but Lord knows what blood
Mingled its currents, and poured in her veins;
Iberia and Carthage and Rome swelled the flood,
Visigoth, Vandal and Moor; such is Spain's.
How came it? Who knows? But the lad went adrift,
With a cloud on his life, a pang in his heart,
A pall on the past which man may not lift,

Despair and defiance as steeds at life's start.
Such is the chariot race Pedro has run;
Little he's recked where his coursers have sped;
They have borne him exultant in heat of the sun
Through the dust and the din from the past that is dead.
Has he lacked for his bread, or light love, or strong wine?
Not he to whom action and ardor is life;
The sea is his slave, he rules on the brine,
He is ready for toil, or action, or strife.
But why stands he now with that mock on his lip,
So that, somehow, the vendors of this or of that,
When they see him, find reason to quietly slip
Round the edge of their stalls, and eagerly chat
About nothings with neighbors, his eye to escape?
Well they remember—'tis two years ago—
How with Carlos Hernandez he had that small scrape
And gave him a sort of back-handed blow;
It counted for nothing—but Carlos is dead.
And now just a twelvemonth he quarreled again
With Francois Lafitte, and a shot in the head
By somebody put poor Francois out of pain.
The roustabout Steve called him "Dago" one day;
Steve was a negro as black as the soot;
He was spoiled by his freedom, and had his horse play
By kicking and stamping—a giant and a brute.
This little Olivio caught up a stone,
And hit him right square on his chimpanzee brow;

So that stretched like Goliath Steve fell with a groan,
And wanders round witless, a big beggar now.
He beat slim Camille with the hilt of his knife,
And choked her and kicked her; the court could
not act;
Little Camille would rather lose her own life
Than hurt this Olivio by proving the fact.
But why tell afresh the devil's own beads,
This rosary black with guilt, shame and crime,
Where each bead that is dropped rankles and bleeds
— Let them sink to perdition, and rot in the slime.

II

But there now stands Pedro, waiting, it seems,
For some one to come and cross his red path;
His brow has grown darker, as if evil dreams
Were conjured from hell by the spell of his wrath.
And hither comes stalking, sombre and stern,
The sailor, Gil Sanchez, a fisherman now,
Basque to the bone, with dark eyes that burn,
A resolute jaw and a heavy square brow.
Broad-shouldered, thin-flanked, he marches right on,
And looks not to right or to left as he goes;
He carries his crest as high as a don—
What matters the purse when the gold in it shows?
Straight onward he comes; but fronting him full,
Pedro steps forward and says with a sneer,
"Blessed Virgin protect us! Here's a Biscayan bull;
Run, good people, and hide; you have reason for
fear,"

The sailor stopped short, his eye on his foe;
A moment he pondered, as gathering strength;
Then with words that came dropping, weighty and slow,
He cast back the reproach, "So Pedro, at length,
You pick out this place to answer the word
Which clothed you with shame from your head to your feet
When your loaded dice won. You never once stirred
Last night, though you shivered, when I branded you cheat."
"Thou liest, thou son of a she-wolf, thy den
Was a cave in the rocks; thy plundering mother"—
But Gil Sanchez flings back, "It comes to this then;
Call *Don* Pedro a cheat, and he calls you — *another*.'
"You call me a cheat! You pirate! You thief!
I will have your heart's blood, if to meet me you dare."
The Basque strode toward him, but a sigh of relief
From the gathering crowd heaved out on the air,
As Pedro leaped backward and broke through the ring,
His glittering eye glancing and taking in all;
His enemy's menace, the crowd, everything,
Till he saw what he wanted, a knife on a stall.
Like lightning he sprang and seized the bright blade;
Then, with bounds like a panther, right onward he came
At the man he had fled from. But Gil (not afraid,
Though he saw that his life was the stake of the game),
In turn wheeled and fled, some advantage to gain,

For he felt that the battle was badly begun.
'Tis a race now for life; down each narrow lane,
Around booths, between stalls, how they pant as
they run.
But the tumult, the people, the women who shriek,
The wringing of hands, the tears, the pale face
Of Barbara, who bends o'er her babe, wan and meek,
And prays Blesséd Mary for safety and grace!
See the negroes, they chatter and roll their white eyes
And huddle and scamper, their black skins turn grey;
Look at them, their feet keeping time as he flies
With Pedro or Gil; 'tis as good as a play.
"Ha! talk of your bull-fights, but this is a time
To feel every nerve as tense as the string
On a bow," says Baltasar; "perhaps 'tis a crime,
But I feel like I saw that Basque bull in the ring,
And the bull-fighter close at his heels with the sword
To give him the stroke; but beware of his horn,
Thou bull-killing Pedro! I have known a man gored
By a bull of this breed; thou must smite and not
scorn."
But the fleet-footed Pedro is gaining; Gil sees,
At the turn of a stall the grim shadow of death;
Yet his eye is alert as he rapidly flees,
And he gathers his strength as hard comes his breath.
There lies the great cleaver that Sigismund swings,
When he hews up the beef which hangs o'er his block;
Sanchez pounces upon it, and, whirling, he flings
Himself straight at his foe, who recoils from the shock.
Too late, mad pursuer, on thy shoulder-blade falls

The axe, crushing down through brawn and through
bone;
The red blood leaps, spurting o'er pavement and walls,
And the fighter sinks down with a curse and a groan.
His eyes swim in blackness, but his fingers still clutch
At the hilt of his knife and then feebly relax;
And mangled and crumpled he dies in a hutch.
Sanchez gives him one look, then throws down the axe.
The people come gathering; a roar and a rush,
Some shrieks and a sob from Camille who bends
O'er the dead; "O my heart!" then a hush.
The policeman is here — the tragedy ends.

THE SKYLARK.

I rise, aspiring bird, with thee,
On pinion light, to soar, and see
The mysteries of the upper air;
My spirit poises on its wing,
And learns with thee to praise and sing
Fullness of beauty everywhere.
On fleecy chariots of the cloud
We float, drawn by our coursers proud,
The air steeds from the west wind's stalls;
Ocean and land far down grow dim,
While through the azure depths we swim,
Voice answering voice with echoing calls.
Up through the flood of ruddy light,
We heavenward cleave our double flight,
Till on the thin air's outer bound
We pause, and o'er the abysmal verge
Pour volumed forth a choral surge,
That faints in circling waves of sound.

EVOLUTION AND CREATION.

I

Before the Kosmos, Chaos ruled without law or design;
No fiat brought forth order or caused the light to shine;
At first, man was potential, and then was protoplasm,
Though science does not tell us how to bridge the awful chasm;
But predicate a Monad, and without the aid of fiction,
Should another glide across it, life would be evolved by friction.
Thence with life there came a cell, and the cell became a growth,
And the growth became a Something, and another Something; both,
In the course of generations too long to note by time,
Grew at last to be a polywog, with an increment of lime.
So it got an osseous structure and wriggled with its tail,
Till it stretched into a saurian—a weasel—or a whale;
Though it may have been an ostrich, or it may have been an ape,
But it still kept developing—from this is no escape;

And thus in many epochs it got itself a thumb,
Until at last it was a man, but pithecoid and dumb,
Then certain rolling molecules and maggots of the brain
Gave rise to speech and intellect — nothing can be more plain.
Reason begat utility, equivalent, you know,
To love and virtue, hope and God—most evidently so.
And thus through age and epoch and æon piled on age
At last we reach a Huxley and learn to make a Sage;
And so the world goes round and round, as Old Aunt Rhody said,
And ancient Chaos' eldest son, King Chance, reigns in his stead.

II

In the beginning was the Word;
It breathed its fiat, Chaos stirred;
Obedient to the First Great Cause,
It moved according to His laws,
And order reigned, design prevailed,
Nature was born, and life unveiled.
Whether our minds can grasp this plan,
Or trace the origin of man,
Why agonizing reel in doubt?
Why gibe and jeer and mock and flout
At those self-centred truths which stand
Like beacons on a desert strand?
On each soul's consciousness they rest,
Self-evidential, and impressed

With that sharp signet, on whose face,
Deep-graved, "Necessity," we trace.
We know that like a prisoner pale,
Who from the windows of his jail
Can catch but glimpses of that world
Whose constellations are unfurled
To happier eyes which freely gaze
On all the stars in midnight's maze,
The spirit fettered here to earth
By flesh and time and space, the worth
Of realms beyond its ken can guess
Only in purblind feebleness;
But still its ample pinions feel
The power to rise and soar and wheel
And revel where the bow is bent
Which spans with hope the firmament.
Why seek our Maker in the dust,
Rather than rest in solemn trust
On that great arm able to clasp
The universe within its grasp,
And hold the balance firm and sure
While time and space and worlds endure?
What does it matter whether man
Six thousand years ago began,
Or through a myriad centuries grew,
Becoming wiser and more true?
Go, boasting skeptic, forge the links
'Twixt dust and that which knows it thinks;
Teach science to span the abyss that gapes
'Twixt man and all the race of apes;

Tell why this self-sufficing force,
Which once gave life in nature's course,
No more informs the insensate clod,
And blindly does the work of God;
Else cease thy clamorous, strident claim
That science walks thus blind and lame,
Making hypothesis the base
For all the history of our race.
Through nature's realm law reigns supreme;
Its Giver is no dotard's dream;
The universe, built with design,
Is proof of power and will divine;
And in creation, be the cause
His first or secondary laws,
By countless links this endless chain
Leads back at last to God again.

THE EPITAPH.

Friend Phil, to me convivially,
Declared he 'd write my epitaph;
And thus he spake with tankard high,
With merriment in lip and eye,
And quip and jest and ringing laugh.

"Here lies friend Will; his voice is still;
But ah! he was good company."
Those were his words; but many a day
Since then hath fled and passed away—
And such a friend I ne'er shall see.

Low lies his head in narrow bed,
No more we'll hear his joyous laugh;
Now I am such poor company,
No one would think it fitted me;
So, Phil, be this *thy* epitaph.

THE SEALED BOOK.

A RIDDLE.

No royal road to learning leads,
Great thoughts are born, like golden deeds,
From large attempts and strenuous needs;
And thus, in every clime and age,
The aim of scholar, saint and sage
Centres upon the inspiring page,
Where wit and wisdom, worth and sense,
And charity, void of offence,
Combine toward perfect excellence.

TO GERTRUDE.

Little lady! Thee I bless,
With a patriarch's tenderness!
May thy dreams be dreams of truth;
May thy deeds be deeds of ruth;
May thy hours on golden wing
Bring thee gifts good angels bring;
And may thy spirit dwell in light,
Where all is pure and fair and bright.

A BENEDICTION.

Child of my choicest friend, who next my heart
Since youth's bright prime I've worn, nor found him less
In loyalty and love than honor's core!
Fair babe, thou tender bud upon a stem
Of fine ancestral stock, whose honest worth
Hath good report of all men in the past!
With promise of new honors to the old
I greet thee! This my welcome: may the dew
Of thy young life exhale to heaven in prayer,
And may thy morn be always summer bright
With smiles from God's good angels standing near!
The heritage of joy and beauty thine,
Such as thy mother hath; thy father's force,
Pliant and masterful as ashen wand
When wielded in the archer's sinewy grasp!
May thy good mother's care mould all thy days
To virtue by her gentle sway and love;
And may thy noon blaze like thy noble sire's,
Who, consecrated in the cause of truth,
Did strenuous services on the tented field
And later brought his laurels to the board
Where wisdom counsels for the good of state.
Thine be his eloquence, his sense, his truth,
His fine intelligence, his prudent thought;
Thine be his manly symmetry of soul,
His courage, gentleness and lofty grace;

And when thy westering day draws near its close,
God grant thee all things good, grace, wealth and
power,
Wisdom and strength and venerated age;
And may God keep thee with thy heart still young,
Grateful and trusting, constant, tender, true.
Thy naming brought a blessing, thy name be blessed.
It soothed a heart sore struggling in the depths,
And braced a spirit which the storms of fate
Were beating wildly. Thou 'rt the gentle star,
Whose sweet, auspicious influence shall guide
The wearied voyager to a haven of rest—
Of rest and hope,—since thou the token art
How firm the base of ancient friendship stands.
The omen shall not fail, but, rising still,
High in the ascendant it shall lustrous shine
With benefaction and with good to man;
Its radiance mild, here kindled, far shall beam
Upon thy race and all things great and small.
Like a green olive tree, with steadfast trust
In God's great mercy, may'st thou flourish wide,
Deep-rooted, long enduring, peaceful, strong,
Shedding abundance on a grateful land.
May all the clouds that seem to frown above
Be to thee but the shadow of God's wings,
And all the sunshine but his smiles of love;
And may thy children and their children come
To do thee reverence in the days beyond.
This be the blessing of a heart outworn
To one fresh springing to the joys of life.
Benedicite!

THE LIVE OAK.

O stately tree! proud, dark and lone,
Read me the runes that thou hast known,
In the long ages thou hast grown
On this low mound, whose shelly core
Was built beside the Gulf's low shore
By tribes whose forms are seen no more.
Thy branches stretch their arms on high,
The forked lightnings to defy
And the fierce blasts that hurtle by;
Thy lustrous foliage ever green,
Rich as the mantle of a queen,
Gladdens the solitary scene;
Or weeds of moss thy limbs array,
Like an old friar clad in gray,
Whose cowléd head is bowed to pray.
Reveal, O oracle! the spell
Dodona's priestess knew so well,
When, shrouded in her sylvan cell,
She heard the voice that ne'er deceives
In the low murmur of thy leaves
And the weird melody it weaves;
Or, if for us the magic chime
That rings the future's matin prime
Is silent of the coming time,

Tell me, old oak! tales of the past,
Thy struggles with the tempest's blast,
And all the hoard of lore thou hast.
Tell me how, on this verdant sod,
The Indian, who as master trod,
In the sun's glory worshipped God;
And, gathering in from bay and creek,
Each band led by a plumed cacique,
Came in its boat of carven beak
Here to hold council, and debate
The weal of their primeval state,
And all their deeds of war narrate.
Tell how the Spaniard fixed the Cross
Beneath the shadows of thy moss,
And years began of strife and loss;
Till, vanished both, the Saxon's tread
Threads aisles as solemn as e'er led
Where dim cathedral arched o'erhead—
That stalwart race, whose onward stride
Takes no step backward, and whose tide
Force cannot stay, nor power abide.
Prince of the forest! king of trees!
Breasting the battle and the breeze,
I see thee ride the stormy seas;
Reborn as a stately ship again,
Sailing far o'er the Southern Main,
Lord of the billows thou shalt reign.
But whatsoe'er thy fate shall be,
'Tis fixed by Heaven's high decree,
As death, or lofty destiny.

Living, or dead, thou still shalt stand,
Robust and sound, unshaken, grand,
A symbol of our Southern land.
Nor scorching ray, nor mantle spread
By winter's hand above thy head,
Shall bring thee blight, or wake thy dread,
Shall mar the beauty and the sheen
That dwell forever in the green,
The emerald of thy leafy screen.
Thy fibre tough and ribs like rock
Shall meet and fend the battle's shock
And the tornado's rage shall mock.
When on thy heart smite blade and sledge,
'Twill blunt the axe and turn the edge,
And crush the hand that wields the wedge;
And, hewed by whatsoe'er command,
Will long survive the shaping hand,
Proud symbol of our Southern land.

VIII

PANSIES, VIOLETS AND ASPHODELS.

"There is pansies, that's for thoughts,"

"The pansies streaked with jet,
The glowing violet."

—*Lycidas.*

"Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath."

"All these true notes of immortality
In our heart's tables we shall written find."

—*Sir J. Davies.*

"Adversity, life's thistle, thou 'rt a triple crown;
First sting, then flower, and last the buoyant down."

—*Adapted from John Foster.*

"For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his life which he spendeth as a shadow."—*Ecclesiastes vi. 12.*

REFLECTION.

Reflection, sombre muse, who turns our eyes
From this vain world and transient things of naught,
To that pure essence which transcends the skies,
And dwells immortal in unclouded thought!
Grant to the man whose soul for truth has sought,
Who patient delves for wisdom's utmost root
In lowest depths and mysteries of the mind,
To shred the tree of knowledge of its fruit,
And thus, perchance stripped of its bitter rind,
To taste its meat and e'en its core to find.
O nurse of Conscience! We, who seek the true,
Ask for thine aid to read the palimpsest,
Whereon is written in vulgar script the new,
Hiding in hieroglyph whate'er is best,
And leaving still its riddles to be guessed.

"THE LEGEND OF JUBAL."

(TO GEORGE ELLIOT.)

A voice comes sounding o'er the mighty main,
How Jubal's lyre woke music's earliest strain,
And poesy was born in human pain;
How the great soul that gave the idea birth,
Spurned and derided sank to mother earth,
All men forgetting one man's priceless worth.
But though in dust he sought his kindred clod,
Through airy realms his conquering idea trod,
And grew, and, mounting, triumphed as a god.
Thus out of death sprang life, and the blank doom
Of one awoke the many, and the tomb
Touched by the spirit was the teeming womb
Whence stirred to being that divine unrest
Which quickened once still strives toward the Best,
And will not down at any power's behest;
Sweet discontent, that feels a secret pain
In what it doth, and what doth not, attain,
And counts all gain as loss, all loss as gain.

WHITED SEPULCHRES.

Where dwells the soul so pure and bold as dare
Its central secrets to the world lay bare,
Its faults and follies, its frailties and woes
To the cold stare of callous man disclose,
Or e'en to the scrutiny of one kind eye
Reveal its labyrinthine mystery?

Choose ye from those of loftiest mould and mind,
Highest in heart, an honor to mankind,
Some name that like a pyramid doth stand
Broad on its base, severe, compact and grand;
Its apex challenges the eternal sky,
Its outlines sharp time's waste and storms defy;
Go, thread its vaulted cells; do marble walls,
Crusted with gems, enclose enchanted halls,
Where art supreme hath blended the sublime
With things most beautiful? Ah, no! the slime
Of ages vents its foul and festering breath
And stains a crypt—its only tenant, death.
A prophet speaks; thousands his word obey;
His voice is law; he tears the veil away;
Mokanna's face, visage of fiendish ghoul,
Dismays each breast; the godlike now is foul;
And yet 'tis but the lifting of the veil
That chills the heart and makes the cheek grow pale.

Mokanna dwells in every bosom's core,
Shrouded from those who kneel, and, blind, adore.

O Pentecostal flame, pure truth, true light,
Purge and illume the sepulchre's black night!
O blood of Christ, which washeth every sin,
Heal the marred visage, cleanse the soul within!

THE WASP.

I dreamed that I was young and strong,
Rich, happy, wise and great,
And that I had the gift of song
To gladden such estate;
Yet all was marred — I see you smile —
For poised on angry wing,
A wasp menaced me all the while;
I could not crush the thing.
It vexed my hours of ease; the feast
In vain its bounties spread;
Thought faltered, for its watch ne'er ceased,
While buzzed the wasp o'er head.
I woke at last; 'twas but a dream;
Yet still my wakened sight
Welcomed the morning's blesséd beam
That put the wasp to flight.
So, though our realm, rich in all bliss,
Should bar each sorrow out,
Yet still, in dreams, e'en into this
Must buzz the demon Doubt,
Which, threatening with its poisoned sting,
No power can chase away,
Till Heaven's own light, on seraph wing,
Lets in the perfect day.

THE BUTTERFLY.

IMITATION OF THE GERMAN OF W. HEY.

Ho! little thing
On golden wing,
Flitting, flaunting butterfly!
Why do you play
The livelong day
Underneath the summer sky?

Ah! little boy,
We both enjoy
Bloom-sweets, sunshine, summer-sky;
But the dawn's red
May find me dead,—
For boys and butterflies must die.

CUI BONO.

"Arise, put on thy strength; dreamer, behold,
The world awaits thy coming and thy worth;
It offers all to him, both wise and bold,
Who dare dominion claim on this weak earth!"

Now, wherefore, shouldst thou seek to stir this breast
With vaulting thoughts and aspirations high?
Leave to its solitude the soul at rest,
Ruffled by naught save some half-struggling sigh.

Think'st thou that passion's cyclones have not swept
Its placid waters into lashing waves?
Those blasts still breathe, but by my will are kept
Shackled within the spirit's secret caves.

Since I have gained the power to govern these,
Which now I hold controlled with steady hand,
Would it be wise to give the winds release
And trust the storm to hearken my command?

Tempests are grand from where the tall cliffs frown,
Sheltering the watcher on the rockbound shore;
But he who sails and sees his ship go down
Loses the hope that sinks to rise no more.

The sportive surf comes leaping to the land,
Its silver crest with sparkling diamonds decked,
Its murmurs music; on the tawny strand
Search for the drift, the relics of the wrecked.

"Arise! put on thy strength!"—'Tis mockery;
Not all the outer world is worth the strife.
To guard the soul and keep it strong and free
Fill up the narrow measure of a life.

CARPE DIEM.

Behold at dawn the opening flower
Unfold its beauties to the light,
And bring to the auspicious hour
The dew and fragrance of the night.

When noon's meridian splendors blaze,
What full blown glories greet the sun,
Where glow the aster's rival rays,
Nor seek its eager gaze to shun.

But parching heat, or killing frost,
Strikes to the heart the vaunting bloom;
Its splendors fade, its sweets are lost;
It meets the universal doom.

And so decay all earthly things,
The beauty, pride and joy of man;
What glamour hope around them flings
Will fade away with youth's brief span.

Catch, then, the fragrance while you may,
Breathe joy while yet its perfumes last;
And seize each fitting bliss to-day,
That with to-morrow joins the past.

Nor mourn because perennial spring,
To thee, by fate, is still denied;
What harvest autumn frosts may bring
Accept, with what may else betide.

REST.

Here let me rest among these grand old mountains,
Whence flowed the parent stream that filled these veins;
The rivulet returns unto the fountains,
Weary of wandering in the wide spread plains.

Weary of life and of its endless striving;
Weary of the world's unloving, hot embrace;
Weary of wild and aimless chariot-driving,
Where Phaethon, not Phœbus, guides the race.

Here let us rest with the blue vault above us,
Where yon grey mountain rears its cloud-capped head;
Here may we fancy that the angels love us,
And Hope, long buried, may rise from the dead.

Here let us pause and drink fresh inspiration
From living wells that pierce the upper air;
Is't a humor of the imagination,
Or do its draughts bring surcease to our care?

Is there a healing in these stirring breezes,
That soothes the anguish of a life undone;
Or must we toil till the heart's beating ceases,
And all this unrequited race is run?

But why now vex the soul with troubling questions,
For answers from an oracle long dumb?
Let us consent to Nature's kind suggestions,
Content with respite till the solace come.

LETHE.

Come, old friend,
Drink to oblivion;
For all things end
Like Merlin and Vivien;
Wisdom list'neth to the world's illusion,
And the end thereof is death and confusion.

Canst thou stay
The wingéd present?
It hastes away
With step incessant;
Raindrops sink in an infinite ocean,
And thoughts of man are but modes of motion.

Wealth, power, fame,
Time's razing finger
Blights like flame;
But yet they linger
In the chatter of the human magpie,
The fainting yödel of the Alpine cragcry.

Canst forget
Love's sweet dominion?
Not yet, not yet!
But Lethe's pinion
Will sweep like night o'er its fair creations,
And bury in blackness the light of nations.

LOTUS LAND.

Upon the strand of Lotus Land
My slender shallop went ashore;
There was it cast with shivered mast
And riven sail and broken oar,
To leave that pleasant land no more,
To quit that fateful land no more.

Its scented air, its blossoms rare,
Invited to a sweet repose;
Nepenthe pale, with filmy veil,
Out of the silvery waters rose,
The volume of the past to close,
With drowsy hand its clasps to close.

With mild surprise, our dreamy eyes
See visions lingering as they pass,
That may not stay, but glide away
And vanish from the sight, alas!
Like shadows mirrored in a glass,
Like shadows in a magic glass.

Now joy is dead and hope hath fled,
But sorrow folds her sable wing;
Serene we wait the voice of fate,
And what these halcyon days may bring,
While listening to the Sirens sing,
The songs the cruel Sirens sing.

KOSMOS.

THE DREAM OF THE TIME-SPIRIT.

From the centre of Being out to the verge,
Whence its circles again begin and pervade,
The billows of Thought through the Universe surge
And the Whole through omnipotent Reason is made.
From the Great White Throne pours a crystalline sea,
A limitless ocean with never a shore,
And its unceasing tides flow eternally,
And will roll and roll on forevermore.

The foam tipped crests of its waves break in spray
—The infinite forms of the Infinite Thought—
But the spindrift and sea pulse a law obey
That governs their going, by which they are wrought
Into semblance of substance that mirrors the One—
Name it nature, or matter, the frame of things,
The universe, kosmos—yet planet and sun
And stars are but spume that the thought wave flings.

From the splendid sun-stars that blaze in the belt
Of Orion, marching the realms of the night,
To the snow flakes that sparkle a moment and melt
And the dew-drop that glistens in morn's early light
—What are they but moods of the Being that Is,
The forms that His Thought in its process may take?
Constellations and atoms are equally His,
Creation's the mould that His ideas make.

The effluence of Spirit—of the Substantive Whole—
Omnipotent Will—is the ultimate force,
And, embodied in man, manifest in his soul,
It images forth its creative source.
When the self-conscious Unity limits His Thought
By the measure of number, of time and of space,
In the spirit of man this marvel is wrought,
That it mirrors in little the Infinite face.

The vast ocean current, with mysterious drift,
Sweeps onward and onward from tropic to pole,
But with whirlpool and bend its tides veer and shift
And backward the seaweed sometimes seems to roll;
So the small human eye, purblind, only sees
The refluent ripple in God's great Gulf stream,
But its flood tide bears on, under Heaven's decrees,
The eddies of evil that mar the World-Dream.

THE THANE'S SAYING.

Paulinus the missionary urged King Edwin to cast down his idols and worship Christ. Then the King's chief councillor spake thus:

Out of the stress and the strain
Of a stormy night,
Out of the cold and the rain
Into the light
Of Earth's Walhalla,
Cometh the swallow
—O dreary flight!
The blast through the opened casement flings
The little bird with its weary wings.

Out of the darkness he came
To this banquet hall,
Where the torches all aflame
Flare on the wall;
And ribald laughter
Shaketh the rafter,
And jest and brawl
And the wine cup and wassail wax high—
Whither away shall the small bird fly?

Dazed by the glow and the glare,
And the stifling smoke
Of torch and cresset that flare,
And smouldering oak,
Wildly he flieth,
Faintly he crieth,
Till all the folk
Look to behold what the end shall be
Of this piteous birdling's tragedy.

But out through a window wide
Of the noisy room,
The tired pinions swiftly glide
Into the gloom;
So no man knoweth,
Whither he goeth,
Beyond the tomb.
Here the soul fluttereth, its past forgot,
And whither it soareth, it seeth not.

WELCOME, DEAR GRIEF!

Welcome, dear Grief! thy footstep on the stair,
And thy familiar hand upon my door,
Thy sigh soft heaved upon the midnight air,
Thy dark robe's trail upon my chamber floor,
Are welcome evermore.

For how can joy, present or yet to come,
Of solace to me grant such ample store,
As wakeful memory, which, though cowled and dumb,
Yet mirrors to my gaze the days of yore,
Made welcome evermore.

Vain pleasure, with thy mimicry of youth,
Thou hast no power my dead hopes to restore;
Nay rather memory and sad eyed truth,
With thee, dear Grief, recalling love's lost lore,
Be welcome evermore.

PRAYER ANSWERED.

The sun from heaven that beameth
O'er land and sea,
And with its splendor streameth
O'er lake and lea,
Still lifteth up with every ray
The mists that on their bosom lay.

And God's great love, which poureth
On hearts of men
The benison that ensureth
Return again,
Still draweth by power divine on high
Our human woes in prayer and sigh.

But rising vapor hideth
With clouds the sun,
While the rude storm king rideth,
His race to run;
So prayer and sigh seem oft to rise
In frowning clouds and angry skies.

But as the rain descendeth
On blade and flower,
And as the rainbow bendeth
At sunset hour,
So God's great grace shall answer prayer,
Love bless the earth, hope paint the air.

REJOICE.

Rejoice, a child is born!
The herald of the sky
Proclaims a joyous morn,
A glorious destiny.
An incense breathing air
His swelling breast shall fill;
And music everywhere,
From bird and leaf and rill,
And, tenderer than them all,
A mother's voice shall soothe
And answer to his call;
And gentle hands shall smooth
The pillow of the child;
So that great Nature's voice,
Earth-mother calm and mild,
Calls out, "rejoice, rejoice!"

Rejoice! The budding form
Hath blossomed now at length
Into a man, whose warm
Blood adds strength unto strength,

Action in every nerve,
Fibre and thew and limb,
Able to strive or serve,
To hew, to hunt, to hymn
With clarion notes the praise
Of the dear Lord who gives
To man such joyous days
In all the days he lives;
So that such goodly power
Gives every heart a voice
To praise creation's flower,
And shout aloud, "rejoice!"

Rejoice! the ripened fruit
Hangs on the bending bough;
And sweeter than the lute
Are wisdom's words; while brow
Of venerable age
And heart of tender ruth
Mark the beloved sage,
The friend of right and truth.
His to rehearse the lore
Of all the good and wise,
Dispense their hoarded store,
And give light to the eyes
Of those who darkly grope,
And to the dumb give voice,
And to the fainting, hope,
And bid himself, "rejoice!"

Rejoice! The Lord draws near
And in his arms bears sheaves.
Ah! friend! Be of good cheer,
When from the autumn leaves
He plucks the mellow fruit
And lays it on his breast.
The honeyed tongue is mute,
The eager brain at rest;
The work of life is done,
The harvest must be stored;
The harbor has been won;
The bark must now be moored;
But through the gathering gloom,
Hark to the angel voice,
Which whispers from the tomb,
"Rejoice, O soul, rejoice!"

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

What is this fear of death?
Is it the dying,
The gasp of the last, struggling breath,
When life is flying?
The fading memory of this world of sorrow,
The dark foreboding of a fearful morrow?

Is it the beaded brow,
The eye that glazes,
The once strong arm, so feeble now;
The unknown mazes
Of those dread chambers, from whose lowering portals
Return no more retreating feet of mortals?

Is it, that—all forgot,
No loved one keeping
Sad, tender watch above the spot
Where we lie sleeping—
We shrink to think upon the earthy pillow,
The votive urn, the sod, the pendant willow?

Strive to forget the grief
O'er death that lingers;
The choking sobs, the farewells brief,
The picking fingers
That seem to weave, in some sad, vacant manner,
A blazon for death's overhanging banner.

Forget them, feeble Man!
But oh, remember!
That, leaping from our narrow span,
The fading ember
Flashes from ashes toward a bliss supernal,
In spaces infinite and realms eternal.

EUTHANASIA.

THREE VOICES.

MILES.

How would I die? As falls the oak
When riven by the lightning's stroke,
Amid the storm, the stress, the strain
Of battling clouds and driving rain;
When all the mighty winds that blow
Come sweeping on like that Arch-foe
Who led his legions to the assault
Up the long steeps of Heaven's blue vault.
Not to the touch of slow decay
My heart of oak should wear away,
With bark and bough and haughty crest
Mouldering to dust — the rust called rest.
For me the tempest and the strife;
Rather one hour of actual life
Than wear out cycles in a dream,
Where earthly shadows glide and scheme
And weary heaven with muttered spells,
Then sink into their sodded cells.
The old Greek gave the brave heart voice,
In fleet Pelides' noble choice.

My requiem be the thunder crash
That follows on the fatal flash,
Whether of heaven's unerring blow,
Or the fell stroke of human foe.

CLERICUS.

O not for me the sudden blow
That lays the forest monarch low!
Rather midst friends, whose keen distress
Shall share my gloom and make it less;
With kindly hands to soothe my pain,
And friendship's sadly decorous train
To lead me down to that dark shore
Which all must leave and touch no more
I'd tread the flinty path, and lean
On pity's arm, with thought serene,
Buoyed by philosophy's wise speech
And truths religion bends to teach.

MILES.

That Norseman old, whose fiery blood
Peril and pain of field and flood
Had left untamed, saw dim the truth
That fate and nature feel no ruth

For man, their youngest, tenderest child,
Born in the purple, yet defiled.
When stark death came, he raised his hand;
"Give me," he cried, "my battle brand;
Set me astride my war-horse bold;
I'll meet this foe, as erst of old
I've met all foes; I'll meet death now
In arms opposed with fearless brow."
Aye, best of all, in battle's brunt,
To fall with mortal wound in front,
When serried legions hesitate
To rush right on at war's red gate,
But touched at last with noble shame
By some heroic voice, like flame
Sweep o'er the field, till, clasped in death,
Sink friend and foe, 'neath battle's breath;
Then would I fall, midst steel and fire,
With victory for my funeral pyre.

CLERICUS.

Better like Socrates, in awe,
But not in fear, fulfil the law
And bow to Athens' unjust decree,
Finding in death a victory
For truth o'er all the brood of wrong,
And live in story and in song.
Or, if oblivion, with its train

Of fading shadows, needs must reign
O'er thee and thine, breathe on the air
To him who heareth, heedeth prayer,
One sigh to take thee to His breast,
The infinite, eternal rest;
Then turn with steady step away
From darkness to the realms of day.

SAPIENS.

What matters how death comes or when;
It comes to all the sons of men.
What is for all must needs be wise,
Must needs be good, if human eyes
The scope could see of that full plan
Made by divinity for man.
The soul prepared stands like a rock
'Gainst battle's stroke or tempest shock;
The scaffold and the hemlock bowl
Shake not its lofty self-control,
Nor superstition's gloomy fears,
Dinning death's terrors in its ears.
It knows that He who gave us breath
Gives a like blessing in our death;
That the same care which shields our prime
On this low-lying shoal of time,
Which stretches out on either side
Washed by eternity's dark tide,

Will guide us on that unknown shore
The faltering tongue names "Evermore,"
And guard the full grown spirit's path
With love and joy, not woe and wrath.
Be sure that justice reigns and truth;
Hope leans secure on heavenly ruth.

"Fade, flowers, fade; nature will have it so;
Tis but what we must in our autumn do."

—*Waller.*

THE END.

NOTES.

NOTE A.—These verses were written New Year's Day, 1854, and give the literal facts as related to the author at the time. In 1873, Rev. J. J. Lafferty, of Texas, travelling in Texas, wrote home the following account of a similar incident, related to him as occurring in 1868. Whether it was a coincidence, or the evolution of a myth, I cannot say.

"I travelled with a citizen of upper or northern Texas, who gave me an account of the murder of a family in Wise county by the savages, and the heroic fight made by the little boys and their mother before they fell victims to their brutal foe. On the 10th day of August, 1868, the Indians came in sight, and the family of four children and their mother ran into the log cabin and barred the doors. The building had loopholes. The eldest boy—about twelve—took position at one of the notches in the logs. The next boy loaded the empty rifle while his brother was using the other. The mother began moulding bullets, and the two other children—little girls, almost babies—carried the fresh balls across the room to the brave boys. The young rifleman never wasted a shot. His aim was so true and the fire so rapid that the savages imagined there were several rangers in the house. After losing three or four warriors, they got behind the wood pile in the yard. At every crack of the rifle an Indian fell among the logs. He killed seven. An eye-witness of the pools of blood in the yard said the ground 'looked like two beeves had been butchered there.' The Indians were watching a chance to run, when a half-breed who understood English overheard the mother say 'the lead is all out.' They made an assault upon the door, broke it down and slew the heroic family. My informant, who had visited the scene, said the print of a child's foot, wet with blood—its mother's blood—still remained on the floor. No one had ever occupied the house since this horrible tragedy. The men about the United States forts had heard the Indians speak of the deadly fire of the boy, and the half-breed related the story to the traders with the Federal Army on the frontier."

NOTE C.—This version has been changed in some respects from its form as originally printed.

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